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578. Showbus Part 2. UK. Bus Rally. Sept 97. (Dig). More arrivals at Duxford museum shot outside the grounds and then a review of parked buses in the afternoon plus filler material from the Bristol (Swindon) rally, lasts 60 mins.
577. Showbus Part 1. UK. Bus Rally. Sept 97 (Dig). Sunshine blessed the arrival of vehicles in this 60 minute programme shot by Dave Spencer with views on and off site covering the earlier arrivals.
576. Lathalmond. Scottish Bus Museum. Sept 1997. Buses (Dig). Open weekend at this superb museum with all the display areas and workshops together with free bus services within the museum featuring also the Sunday road run departures.
565. Southport/Liverpool. UK. Buses. (Dig) August 1997. 60 minute presentation by Dave Spencer almost half in Southport with open toppers even operating the park & ride service. Liverpool new city routings and Garston village.
564. Gtr Manchester. UK. Buses (Dig) 1997. 60 minute video by Dave Spencer starts in Stockport, June 97 then Bolton July 97 and concludes at Wigan on 16th August 1997, all in sunshine.
563. Aberdeen. UK. Buses (Dig) Aug 1997. A 60 minute presentation by Dave Spencer, wide spread First Bus livery in Grampian fleet lots of new stock, mainly Union St & Station areas includes Stagecoach Bluebird fleet.
562. Scotland. UK. Buses (Dig). March-Aug 1997. 60 minute video by Dave Spencer starts in March at Ardrossan, Greenock and Renfrew then some superb scenes in Dundee in August, nice locations, friendly drivers.
561. Brighton. UK. Buses (Dig) August 1997. 60 minute video by Dave Spencer filmed 2nd Aug in brilliant sunshine after takeover of Brighton Blue buses by Brighton & Hove, many blue buses in old livery with B&H names.
560. London. UK. Buses (Dig) 1997. A look at London buses with scenes at Kings Cross and Enfield in Feb 97, then the small Barking Bus rally, finishes with Ilford July 1997 with new Harris contracts and Ipswich buses on hire.
559. London. UK. Buses (Dig) July 1997. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer on Saturday 26th July at Romford with extensive coverage of all operators around the central bus routes.
551. Isle of Wight. UK. Buses (Dig) June 1997. Filmed by Dave Spencer with scenes in Newport, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Yarmouth. Southern Vectis always a popular operator well covered in this 60 minute video.

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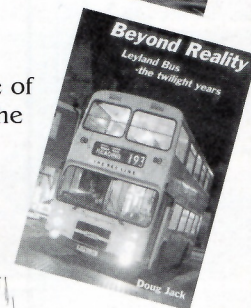
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CROSVILLE

This long awaited volume covers the post war period from 1945-1990 has been prepared by Duncan Roberts, TB Maund, John Carroll and David Meredith. With 304 pages and over 600 illustrations including a large selection of never before seen pictures from the engineering department it is a must for anyone interested in this once great operator.

Sections include: operations; routes; the fleet in great detail; social history as well as many other snippets associated with the operation of a large company such as this.

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Travel West Midlands has revised its standard livery, using the same off-white as its new 'low-floor' livery. Metrobus 2109 (GOG 109W), now one of the oldest buses in the fleet, carries the revised livery in Devon Street, Vauxhall, West Midlands' programme to refurbish Metrobuses has now been terminated, and 2109 was not one of the buses to have been refurbished despite its spruce appearance.

JOHN ROBINSON

BUSES

Volume 49 No 513 **December 1997**

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**SPECIAL
SUPPLEMENT**
Coach & Bus '97
full report

R E G U L A R S

F E A T U R E S

F L E E T N E W S

Is it now time for the Germans to take the British bus and coach market by storm? It has been something of a surprise that so far the German builders have remained on the periphery of the full-size bus and coach world in Britain; worldwide Mercedes is by far the biggest heavy bus manufacturer, while MAN has a 15% share of the bus market throughout Europe.

Both MAN and Mercedes have come into the market in the last few years in conjunction with Optare, but in comparison with volumes sold in other markets — and indeed with volumes of other Optare products — their sales have been on a fairly small, though not actually insignificant scale. Over the last five years or so Mercedes has averaged about 50 a year in Britain and MAN has sold about half that number. There have been numerous occasions when Mercedes-Benz has looked poised to move into the British market, and realising that unsubsidised British operators are not so prepared to part with large sums of money to buy buses as are their counterparts in Europe, even brought in a low-cost chassis in conjunction with Wrights which went down like the proverbial lead balloon. Mind you, MB has pretty well cleared up in the minibus market.

Manufacturers tend to need one major order to gain a critical mass in the market, and both Mercedes and MAN have achieved this. Hot on the heels of Travel West Midlands' decision to go for 100 Mercedes-Benz O.405Ns, the low-floor version of the chassis used by Optare for the Prisma, which Mercedes is bringing in as a complete shell for finishing by UVG, Stagecoach has included 150 full-size MAN low-floor single-deckers, to have Alexander's new 2.55m wide ALX300 body, in its published 1998 orders. This has caused something of a stir, and indeed one could imagine it causing possibly something worse than that in the Volvo camp; Stagecoach has turned its back to a large extent on its usual supplier, preferring to go to Dennis for low-floor double-deckers and for all its midibuses, while the MANs occupy the slot widely expected to be taken by Volvo B10BLEs. Meanwhile Volvo could confidently have expected the TWM order to have been placed instead for more B10Ls.

Of course no manufacturer can expect ever to have everything its own way, and while the choice of MAN by Stagecoach may be a surprise to us Britons, not used to large MAN buses, they are not the first for Stagecoach, which runs them in New Zealand.

Both Mercedes and MAN look poised to do more in the coach market too, the latter having appointed a new dealership and the former having introduced its O.404 coach with a Spanish body.

It's still early days, of course, and it remains to be seen whether other buyers follow the lead of either Stagecoach or TWM. But both are significant players, and Volvo for one will need to keep its eye firmly on the ball to hold on to its No 1 spot. After all, Leyland was once invincible . . .

STEPHEN MORRIS

Cover:
Coach & Bus '97 saw the first British-built low-floor double-deckers. Star of the show was Plaxton's President on an unspecified new Volvo chassis.
STEPHEN MORRIS

IAN ALLAN
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this month's news stories

Stagecoach orders for 1998

Stagecoach orders call for 515 new vehicles to be delivered during 1998. They have caused something of a stir, in that the number of Volvos is well down on previous years, calling only for 100 Olympians and 25 B10Ms. All the midibus orders have gone to Dennis for the Dart SLF, following 90 Volvo B6LEs last year, while the Volvo B10BLE, widely expected to become Stagecoach's standard large single-decker in place of B10Ms used hitherto, does not figure at all. Instead, this year will see the introduction of MAN single-deckers to Stagecoach's UK operations, though MANs are used by the group in New Zealand. Nonetheless 22 B10BLEs with the new Alexander ALX300 body are currently being built for Busways.

Stagecoach chairman Brian Souter commented 'MAN have recognised Stagecoach's position as a major global transport operator with a visionary long-term supply agreement that encompasses all ownership costs, including warranties, spare parts prices and product support'.

Other notable products on Stagecoach's shopping list are 100 Dennis Trident 2s for its London bus requirements — Stagecoach's first order for Dennis double-deckers for the UK — and 25 Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10M coaches.

It is expected that 10 of the Volvos will be articulated coaches, and the order includes some of Jonckheere's Modulo body, which is an Interurban-style vehicle based on the Mistral. The others will be Mistrals. The Modulos will be the first of their kind in Britain, though it is currently available in other markets.

The Jonckheere order is also significant, given that Plaxton has so far fulfilled most of Stagecoach's coach orders, as well as winning the whole of the 1997 minibus order; this year Plaxton does not figure at all. Previously Jonckheere had supplied bodywork on just two out of 12 articulated coaches delivered last year.

Following these orders, the average fleet age will stand at approximately seven years, against an estimated industry average of ten. The orders are as follows:

Quantity	Chassis	Body
150	MAN 18.220 LE	Alexander ALX300
100	Dennis Trident SLF	Alexander ALX400
100	Dennis Dart SLF	Alexander ALX200
100	Volvo Olympian	Alexander RL
40	Mercedes O810D	Alexander ALX100
25	Volvo B10M	Jonckheere Modulo/Mistral

TWM comes to London . . .

Surprise news is that Travel West Midlands has been awarded contracts to operate routes 211 and C1 by London Transport Buses, as part of the competitive tendering process.

The two routes are currently operated by London General. TWM is planning to set up a new base in London, trading under the Travel London brand name.

Route 211 runs between Waterloo Station and Hammersmith Bus Station, and will use new dual-door lowfloor single-deckers, whilst route C1 runs between Victoria and Kensington High Street. This contract specifies lowfloor midibuses.

This is not the first time that the company has operated in London; it owned Stanwell Buses Ltd (trading as Westlink) from March 1994 until September 1995, and it also owned County Bus & Coach from October 1994 until February 1996.

. . . buys more Spectras . . .

Other news of Travel West Midlands is the announcement of an order for 20 further low-floor Optare Spectras for use on its home territory. They will be used on route 50 (city centre to Maypole). This is in addition to the two examples already on order — one for TWM, and one for Scottish subsidiary, Travel Dundee. Another subsidiary, Smiths (now trading as Travel Your Bus) is to have Volvo B10Ls for the service 50Y, which 'competes' with TWM's 50, enabling the whole corridor to be served by low-floor buses.

. . . integrates in Scotland. . .

A new initiative in Scotland, sees Travel Dundee, teaming up with fellow National Express Group company, Scotrail to introduce an integrated ticketing system. The new "LINK" ticket can be bought in Dundee and at Scotrail stations. It allows passengers

return travel to and from a chosen destination on both Travel Dundee buses and Scotrail train services. Jack Henry, chief executive of Travel Dundee said 'Anyone travelling to or from Dundee can benefit from being able to buy just one ticket for a number of bus and train journeys. The "LINK" ticket is fast and convenient and also costs less than paying for individual journeys.'

. . . and finishes with Fleetlines

On a sadder note, 1 November saw the final day of operation by TWM of the Daimler/Leyland Fleetline. An open day was organised at Washwood Heath Garage, the last vehicle in service, no7000, being towed into the garage by TWM staff in customary fashion, having been presented to Aston Manor Museum of Transport, by TWM chief executive David Leeder. A full report, with historical details etc, will appear next month.

EYMS Group splits

In September, EYMS Group announced its intention to split into two independent companies

National Holidays Ltd, the coaching company formed through the amalgamation of the Charterplan and Armstrong Galley companies with the coaching wing of East Yorkshire Motor Services, now operating 62 coaches, is being taken over by a new company — Godfrey Burley Group Ltd. Godfrey Burley was previously a co-owner of the EYMS group. The other co-owner, Peter Shipp continues independently, as sole owner of the EYMS Group, which now just comprises East Yorkshire Motor Services and Finglands.

Coincidentally, almost all of the National Holidays Kassbörner Setras have been sold leaving just one remaining in service.



Charterplan's first Setra, a 15-year old S215HD, became no1 (S15 VTB) during the closing months of its existence with National Holidays. HOWARD J. PILTZ

Slower decline

The number of people using local buses fell by under 1% in 1996/97. This is less than the average for the past decade; it follows a similarly small decline in 1995/96, and a small increase in 1994/95. Local bus mileage in Great Britain increased by 3% in 1996/97, in line with the trend over the last decade during which local bus mileage increased by about a quarter. Provisional estimates of the public support for local bus services outside London show an increase of 1% in real terms in 1996/97. Source: *Bus and Coach Statistics Great Britain 1996/97*.

Registration Notes

D. J. STANIER

Contrary to earlier reports it seems that the matter of what to do about altering the August prefix letter change procedure remains unresolved! Latest reports indicate that R will be in force until September 1998, after which time letters will change every six months until the system is exhausted, which would occur in September 2001.

Stagecoach acquires Walls

Established South Manchester operator Walls Coaches has passed to Stagecoach Manchester. Walls began running services along Wilmslow Road on deregulation and since 1986, Walls has concentrated on local bus operation, building up a sizeable fleet of modern buses.

No vehicles or premises are included in the sale, although Walls' staff have transferred to

Stagecoach Manchester. Much of the fleet comprised DAFs leased from Hughes-DAF, single-deckers with Optare and Ikarus bodywork and double-deckers with Northern Counties. Michael Wall, who is retiring from the business to pursue other interests, said that he was confident that Stagecoach would look after his customers and staff.

Road Traffic Reduction Bill

A Private Member's Bill to reduce road traffic in Britain is being discussed by Parliament on 30 January next. The Bill is being introduced by Cynog Dafis, a Plaid Cymru MP, and has been drafted by Friends of the Earth, Plaid Cymru and the Green Party. It calls for reductions in road traffic over 1990 levels of 5% by 2005 and 10% by 2010, using

measures to encourage 'more sensible' car use and investment in better public transport as well as facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Friends of the Earth says the Bill is backed by more than 300 MPs, but is encouraging people to write to their MP, John Prescott and Gavin Strang in support of it.

Van Hool T9 — Coach of the Year 1998

Van Hool's new T9 range has been awarded European Coach of the Year. The range includes three new coaches, all on display at Car & Bus in Kortrijk, Belgium this year. The T917 Acron is the 13.7m version of the 3.6m high Acron, the TD924 Astromega is a double-deck coach seating between 58 and 81, whilst a 13.7m version the TD927 Astromega can seat up to 84.

Volvo expands bodybuilding portfolio

Volvo Bus Corporation has agreed to acquire 100% of the share capital of Carrus Oy, the Finnish bodybuilder. It will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Volvo in the new year. Carrus built 452 stainless steel bodies in 1996 at three factories, around 60% of which are on Volvo chassis. It is thus the largest bodybuilder in the Nordic region and Carrus bodies will continue to be available on other manufacturers' chassis.

Volvo already owns Swedish bodybuilder Säfle, whose System 2000 technique of producing bodies out of aluminium plank sections has been licensed to Alexander, and is used on the Belfast-built Ultra, which is a Säfle design.

Diary dates

25 November:

Omnibus Society headquarters meeting. 'Stagecoach — a worldwide company'. Roger Bowker, chairman, Stagecoach East London. London Transport headquarters, 55 Broadway, London, SW1 (above St James's Park Underground station), 18.45hrs.

11 December:

Buses Worldwide meeting. Fred Tallant Hall, 153 Lower Drummond Street, London NW1. 19.00hrs.

25 December:

Keighley Bus Museum buses in service between Keighley bus station, Airedale Hospital and other destinations, 11.00-17.30hrs.

PSV registration figures

Manufacturer	September 1997	October 1997	Jan-Oct 1997 total*
Bova	0 (1)	2 (0)	46 (40)
DAF	6 (13)	7 (0)	115 (126)
Dennis	137 (132)	120 (80)	1,114 (959)
Iveco	2 (2)	0 (1)	28 (23)
MAN	0 (7)	5 (2)	18 (37)
Mercedes-Benz	3 (1)	3 (2)	28 (30)
Optare	31 (17)	13 (22)	185 (207)
Renault	1 (0)	3 (0)	5 (2)
Scania	19 (17)	15 (12)	193 (260)
Volvo	98 (115)	126 (120)	1,408 (1,330)
Other British	0 (2)	0 (6)	7 (9)
Other imports	2 (1)	4 (4)	117 (108)
Total British	212 (230)	187 (175)	1,861 (1,584)
Total imports	87 (78)	111 (74)	1,403 (1,547)
Total purpose-built	299 (308)	298 (249)	3,264 (3,131)
Van-derived minibuses	149 (259)	83 (60)	808 (1,403)
Grand total	448 (567)	381 (309)	4,072 (4,534)

*Equivalent 1996 figures shown in brackets. Source — SMMT.



Citybus, Hong Kong, is currently trying five low-floor double-deckers, four Dennis Tridents (two each with Alexander and MetSec bodywork) and this MANCR221LD with Australian-built Volgren bodywork. DANNY CHAN

Arriva! Arriva! — in Copenhagen

Elsewhere in this issue, we report fully on the renaming of the Cowie Group. A new corporate identity — Arriva Passenger Services — along with the livery modelled on this page by what was until recently Maidstone & District 5924, a Northern Counties-bodied Volvo Olympian, will be applied universally to the 28 bus operating companies in the group, sweeping away identities and liveries established in local communities for decades.

Meanwhile Hughes DAF becomes Arriva Bus & Coach and car dealers also change from Cowie to Arriva. The change of name was agreed almost unanimously at a shareholders' meeting on 6 November, and the full story appears on p16.

Prior to this unexpected move, the group acquired in September, a 75.1% share in Unibus Holdings A/S of Copenhagen. Unibus, in whom Arriva's share is worth approximately £1 million, had a turnover of around £14 million last year. It employs 435 people, and maintains a fleet of 167 buses used on tendered routes in the city. Unibus is also the operating part of the consortium which has been

awarded the Copenhagen Mini Metro system. Arriva Group chief executive, Gordon Hodgson said that the acquisition would secure a presence from which to expand by bidding for further tendered routes in Copenhagen, Denmark and indeed the rest of Scandinavia. Presumably Unibus is set to acquire the blue/cream livery?

Picture: TERRY S. BLACKMAN



Halifax Joint Committee developments

Tony Blackman's Halifax Joint Committee has acquired a pair of AEC Routemasters — WLT 324 and 204 CLT. While 204 CLT is in the Halifax version of the orange-green-white livery, WLT 324 uses the same colours in Glasgow fashion.

Veteran Halifax AEC Regent III 277 (BCP 671) has subsequently been retired, after maintaining the punishing 46A Halifax-Hebden Bridge heritage bus service single-handedly since June 1996. Coincidentally with the entry into service of the ex-London pair, on 13 October a new route, 43 Huddersfield-Hebden Bridge, was added to the 46A. Both services have historical connotations, reviving old route numbers — 43 was the number for the Halifax-Huddersfield service in the 'old days'. A service 36 covering journeys to and from the Pellon base to Halifax, Salterhebble and Huddersfield has also started. All are seven days a week operations.

Report and pictures by DAVID J. SMITHIES



Left:
Seen in Huddersfield Bus station in the Glasgow version of the livery is ex-RM324 (WLT 324).

Below
Northgate, Halifax is the location, of ex-RM1204 (204 CLT). It is in the Halifax version of the scheme.



Deadline extended

An extension to the time allowed for the MMC to report on the acquisition by National Express Group of the ScotRail and Central Trains rail franchises has been granted by the Secretary of State of Trade & Industry.

Changes on the Net

As a new facility introduced with the eighth edition of the Great Britain Bus Timetable, which went on sale on 28 September, subsequent major changes can be received on the Internet (www.southernvectis.com).

Though produced by Southern Vectis, the Great Britain Bus Timetable now has sponsorship from the five biggest British bus groups, Stagecoach, FirstBus, National Express, Cowie, Go-Ahead and Blazefield. The current edition is £11 from Ian Allan Bookshops, certain branches of WH Smith or post-free from Southern Vectis, Nelson Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO34 1RD. Mail order customers can order both September and January editions — the latter will include a new National Express pull-out map and guide — for £20.

Southern Vectis now also produces regional booklets as an offshoot of the Great Britain Bus Timetable; the latest is for Cumbria & The Lake District, which is available at £1.50 (inc p&p) from Southern Vectis at the Newport address, above, though is available for 50p from outlets in its own area; others cover the Highlands & Islands of Scotland, Wales and Rural Yorkshire; tel 01983 522456 for details.

More Darts down under

Correspondent, Ian Kerr of Ballajura, Western Australia, informs us of two Volgren-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs, new to PATH Transit. PATH Transit operates 193 buses in the north-west Perth metropolitan area under contract to Transperth.

001/2 at PATH Transit's Karrinyup depot prior to entering service. IAN KERR



Meanwhile ACTION, Canberra, has received its first Wright-bodied Dart SLFs. They were being used for driver training during October. H. RAMSDALE



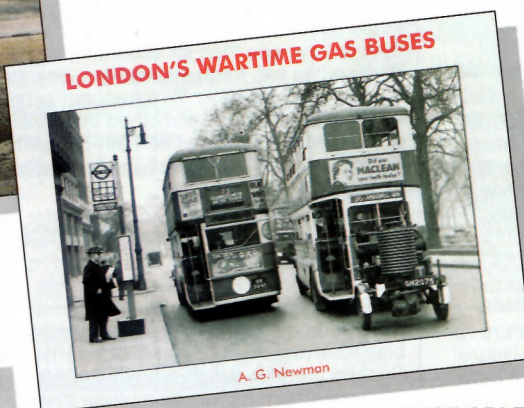


Within a month of the entry into service of London Transport's RT 1, Britain was at war with Germany. Shortages of materials and manpower during the conflict that developed meant that the LPTB's high ideals of aesthetic design had to be sacrificed to the constraints of mere utility. So it was that between 1942 and 1946 an odd assortment of new bodywork was to be seen in place of the smooth lines of peacetime, fitted to chassis makes not normally seen on London buses.

176pp, 10½ ins by 8½ ins, hardback, **£19.95**

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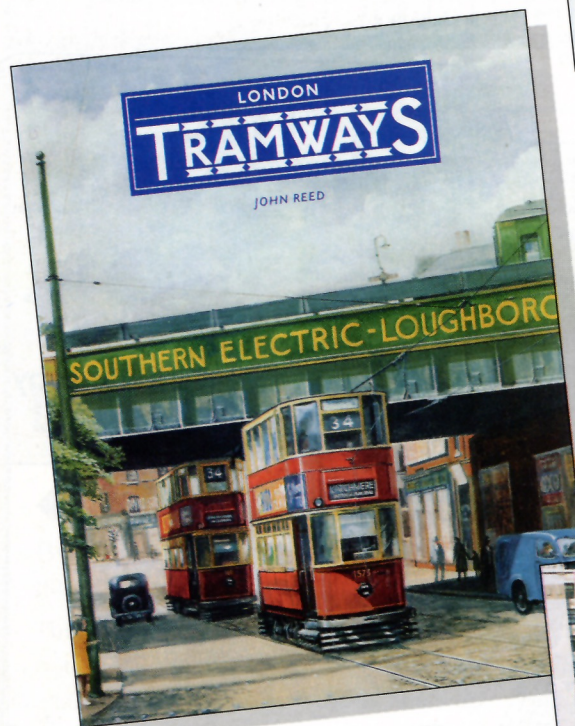
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All are available from your regular supplier, or post-free from us.

Two counties have re-issued maps without a change in format: the excellent Oxfordshire set of 12 maps and the Shropshire System Map, the former from Pindar and the latter from FWT. The **Oxfordshire** set still shows the way for all authorities who think they cannot afford comprehensive timetables (tel: 01865 810405). As before every map has the full county system map plus a blow-up of Oxford City centre and an index on one side. On maps 2-12 the reverse contains the full timetable of every service in the respective area plus a blow-up of the relevant major town, whilst map 1 (Oxford itself) has summary timetables only.

The **Shropshire** map remains a model of clarity with the system map plus many town blow-ups one side and the Shrewsbury and Telford blow-ups plus a frequency-chart on the other (tel: 0345 056785). Sadly,

examination of the last-mentioned shows how Shropshire has suffered the fate of Kent in losing virtually every Sunday bus. (It has also lost most weekday services after 20.00). What a time to have to cut buses like this — just when there is supposed to be a great debate about getting people out of their cars!

The **Stoke-on-Trent** map has been re-issued, though it is the first time it has been published by the City as a unitary authority (tel: 01782 234500). From FWT, it remains one of the finest town maps in Britain with roads named and railways shown and with three insets respectively showing long-distance bus, coach and rail routes. The six-column frequency-chart is also exceptionally clear.

I have explained before how **Derbyshire** re-issues its system map every time it re-issues the relevant timetable book. This time it has gone one better in that because Trent changed

its network before it became economically reasonable for the county to re-issue the entire Mid & South Derbyshire book, leading to a supplement being produced, the map was even updated and re-issued with the supplement! How few counties even think about the consequences of changes to maps in mid-season, let alone go to the trouble of re-issuing them? But then Derbyshire has always been a leader in Britain, despite having a smaller staff than many of the counties that still do very little (tel: 01332 292200).

Finally on the authority front, to two new maps, both from **Bath & North East Somerset**

colours, so an orange road might be owing to an orange route-number or a combination of blue or green numbers.

Not only is a frequency-guide available, but a separate summary of services shows the first and last bus to and from the city centre for each route, including for Sundays and, as with the earlier system map, selected corridor frequencies are also shown. There is yet another frequency-guide for country services plus an index. Finally comes a blow-up of the town centre with every bus stop lettered, as well as routes numbered, and another index shows which services go to various parts of the

city and which city centre stops each uses.

All-in-all these are excellent, novel publications and the Bath map shows a huge amount of detail in a very simple and clear manner and I

thoroughly recommend that every other authority obtains copies for itself. I can, in fact, only ask two things: is Pindar now recommending this as a much better approach than its multi-colour maps for areas where services are frequent; and is there anyone who will now do anything other than throw the awful, disjointed, Badgerline diagrammatic map of Bath in the bin?

Finally I can report that the 7th edition of Mike Harris's map of **Greater London** is now available, updated to 29 November and still £1 plus 20p postage from 43 Meads Court, Carnarvon Road, London E15 4LB. It is as excellent as ever, showing all services including Night Buses, and this time a donation from every sale goes to the National Osteoporosis Society.

ON THE MAP

BARRY S DOE AFIMA, MCIT

(tel: 0117 955 5111). The first is a system map from FWT using colours on routes and numbers to differentiate frequency: daytime every 30 min; daytime hourly; daytime less than hourly; less than six days a week. The reverse has two frequency-guides, one for 'regular' and the other for infrequent services whilst another shows combined frequencies over selected corridors like Bath-Midsomer Norton, which is most useful. A rail sketch-map is added.

Blow-ups of Keynsham and Midsomer Norton will appear in separate timetable booklets soon to be published, but Bath has its own map. This time from Pindar it is unusual in having roads in three colours: orange where the overall daytime frequency is at least every 12 min; blue for every 20 min; and green for hourly. Dashed green is used for anything less frequent. The numbers also utilise these

The technique of rebodding has been used for many years, producing rejuvenated vehicles often radically different in appearance to the originals. Normally, the reason for adopting this practice can be attributed to life expiry of the former body, but there are exceptions where relatively new bodywork has been damaged beyond economic repair by accident or by fire. This month we highlight a recent example in the shape of an 11metre Leyland Olympian ONTL11/2R.

Between 1984 and 1986, London Country acquired a total of 15 long wheelbase Eastern Coach Works-bodied Leyland Olympians for Green Line operation; LRC3 (A103 FPL) with CH45/27F bodywork being one of the first five to enter service in the spring of 1984. In November 1988 all of this initial batch, LRC1-5, passed to Northumbria Motor Services where they were subsequently joined by similar machines from Maidstone & District and lowheight versions from County Bus & Coach.

Unfortunately after a couple of years as Northumbria 353, the ECW body on A103 FPL was badly damaged by fire and the remains scrapped. Following a period in store, a new,

low-height Northern Counties CH47/30F body was fitted and, the by now unique vehicle, returned to service in July 1992 with the registration OSK 774. A further, less noticeable modification was also carried out in the summer of 1994 when the Leyland TL11 engine was replaced by a Gardner unit.

The subject was working a day excursion from the North East to Alton Towers, Staffordshire when caught on camera in June 1995.

THE FENTON FILE

The need to rebody often leads to unusual vehicles, like this Leyland Olympian described by MIKE FENTON

Northumbria's rebodied ex-London Country 11m Leyland Olympian coach.
MIKE FENTON



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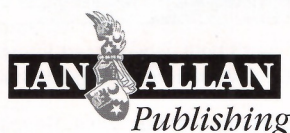


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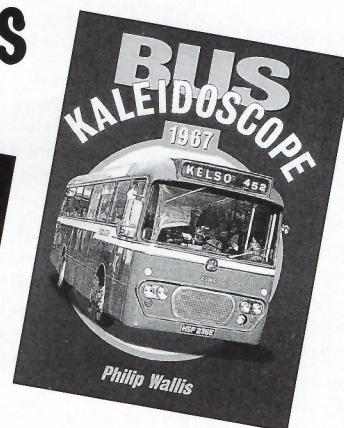


◆ **BUS KALEIDOSCOPE 1967**

By Philip Wallis

ISBN: 071102538X 235mm x 172mm Hardback 112pp £14.99

Thirty years ago, the bus industry was very different to the industry which exists today. In *Bus Kaleidoscope 1967* noted bus photographer Philip Wallis recalls the events that marked the year for the bus and coach industry. He examines in depth the various fleets that dominated the news and the great vehicle deliveries. Also recalled are those towns and cities that bade farewell to the trolleybus during that year. Fully illustrated with a comprehensive selection of photographs recalling the major events of 1967 and those vehicles that were such a feature of the period, the book is a fascinating record of the events in the bus and coach industry at the height of the Swinging Sixties.



Published
November 1997

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News from the capital

JOHN ALDRIDGE

Voluntary hand-over

A big surprise is the decision by London General to surrender three routes voluntarily because of staff shortage. Two of them, S1 and 413, were only won or retained on new tenders about a year ago. The third, C3, has been held for a little longer.

Two of the routes, S1 and 413, have been reassigned by London Transport to Epsom Buses, while the third has gone to Limebourne Travel. Epsom Buses is using mainly ex-London General Metroriders, though I have also noticed an Alexander-bodied Dart on one of the services.

The reason for giving up these routes is driver shortage, which — according to LT — is most acute to the south and west of the LT area. It is having a detrimental effect to the quality of service. LT believes that it is very much a matter of 'the garage culture' — some garages are better than others at coping with the difficulties and being flexible in ensuring duties are covered.

Tender prices are said to be now rising, after 12 years of relative stability. This is apparently only partly due to driver shortages, with other factors such as quality and value also influential.

One wonders whether the surrender by London General of three relatively small routes (in terms of driver and vehicle requirement) is the start of a new trend. For with net cost tendering it is probably more worthwhile for operators to keep the bigger, busier services with greater earning potential, and forego the modest profit and contribution toward overheads that the smaller routes make.

Not that London General has not made strenuous efforts to recruit staff. Like one or two other London operators it has had vehicles and local operators elsewhere in the country trying to recruit and train staff on its behalf. There has been at least one LG Metrobus at Plymouth City Bus for this purpose for a long time.

Another example of the tightness of the staff situation comes from Cowie Leaside, which quite recently won two new contracts, for Sunday operation of route 38 (Victoria-Leyton Green) and night route N38. To work the contracts while more drivers are — hopefully — being recruited, it has had to bring in on secondment staff from Grey Green's Barking and Stamford Hill garages, and from Cowie South London's Norwood, Brixton and Croydon depots.

Bigger and bigger . . .

A surprising, if welcome, move is that 'brand new super low-floor dual-door single-deckers' (to quote the official LT statement) will be introduced on route 31 from next April or May by CentreWest.

Wright-bodied Dennis Darts are the present vehicles on the route, and they in turn replaced the Mercedes/Alexander minibuses which, even earlier, had replaced Routemasters, as part of the brave new scenario then being introduced in London.

The new single-deckers will be two-door which, we are told, will reduce delays at stops where passengers are both boarding and alighting. The 31 is one of those routes which crosses several main traffic arteries as it weaves its useful way from Camden Town to Chelsea. There was a fuss when the Routemasters were replaced by Mercedes-Benz minibuses, and complaints of insufficient capacity, and these complaints have continued ever since, even after the introduction of the Darts.

If you cast your mind back two years to the 1995 Coach & Bus Show at the NEC you may recall that one of the star exhibits was a prototype low-floor Plaxton-bodied dual-door Dennis Dart that was actually bought by LT for evaluation. It was shown with blind for the 31's closely-associated route, the 28 — both were converted from Routemasters to minibuses at the same time — and it was said then that such buses were likely to be used on both routes. The bus did actually work on the 31 briefly, but it will be two-and-a-half years before what was promised then, and was certainly needed, actually happens. It doesn't say much for the speed of decision-making at LT, does it?

First production dual-door Dennis Dart SLFs in London are now in service with Metroline. DLD26 waits at the Oxford Circus terminus of route 113 from Edgware in mid-October.

MICHAEL M. LEE



Time-keeping

Within the next six months, it is planned to introduce Countdown in Kingston and in Lambeth. The main obstacle experienced by operators in trying to maintain reliability, is illegal parking,

particularly at bus stops. Despite camera enforcement and efforts by the police, the illegal use of bus lanes continues. More bus priority measures are urgently needed.

London General has recently given up three routes due to difficulties with getting drivers. One of these is the C3, Clapham Junction-Earl's Court, on which London General ran its Marshall Minibuses. The route, complete with vehicles, has now passed to Limebourne. R. GOODRUM



High standards and low standards

One can expect to see new buses for London displayed at the two-yearly Coach & Bus show at the NEC, just as there used to be at the Earls Court Commercial Motor Show in earlier years. This year was no exception with two red and one yellow buses for permanent London use, a fourth in London colours for future demonstrations, a minibus (for County) and a large single-decker for Speedlink.

The last-mentioned is one of a fleet of Plaxton-bodied DAFs which will provide a temporary link into Heathrow Airport when the British Airport Authority's trains start running from Paddington to a temporary station at Stockley Park. That event was originally promised for the autumn, and is now forecast as 'before Christmas.' The delay is apparently caused by difficulties in getting the mandatory safety approval for the trains, each of which has to be proved in 5,000 miles' running without passengers.

By far the most interesting double-decker at the show was the prototype low-floor Plaxton-Volvo President. David Quainton, Plaxton's sales and marketing director, said before the show that the bus would be in service in London a month after the show, demonstrating to operators.

Breath of fresh air

London bus drivers are not particularly well paid yet, but despite this, there is a reluctance by many of them to work overtime. That is no doubt partly a reflection of the hassle of driving buses in London. The modern large fixed windscreens also mean that drivers' cabs can be ill-ventilated and stuffy places. To try and counteract this one London operator has recently tried three different types of fan installation in its cabs.

Other Plaxton spokesmen later put the timescale at two months. I reckon a bit before next Easter as more likely. Whenever, it will spend just a week with each interested major operator, and I would guess London General or London Central as being likely to be the first recipient.

Although officially bodied by Plaxton, it is of course bodied by Northern Counties. It has been built to meet the requirements (or, in some cases, just the ideas) of LT, which still therefore wields considerable influence over bus design. Its appearance is striking both internally and externally, and indeed the interior puts all other London buses to shame. The staircase is straight, except for one bottom and one top step, and remarkably light and airy, as well as easy to use.

Near the bus at the show was a Northern Counties-bodied Olympian for London Central, one of a large order. One might regard it as a workmanlike design of the 1980s perhaps. But its exposed bolts, screws, odd painted surfaces and angled corners were a far cry from the carefully thought out and colour co-ordinated interior of the RT family or the Routemaster.

A more dramatic approach by Capital Citybus, whose East Lancs-bodied Dennis Arrow at the show featured an air-conditioned cab. It uses a compressor belt-driven off the engine and is reputed to cost £1,600. Spread over, say, a ten-year life that may not be a significant addition to running costs. If it results in fewer drivers leaving it could almost pay for itself. If it increases willingness to work overtime or complete late-running journeys, it could be a positive bonus.

Tenders

From next April more modern Dennis Darts will replace the current vehicles on route 195 (Hayes-Ealing). CentreWest has retained the contract for another five years. When I last looked it was worked by a mix of Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz and Wright-bodied Renault minibuses. Presumably their replacement will be small Dennis Darts already in the fleet.

A bigger series of new contracts in West London covers the U-series of routes in the Uxbridge area. CentreWest has retained U1, U2, U4 and U10. U4 (Uxbridge-Hillingdon-Hayes) will gain new larger low-floor single-deckers. U1, U2 and U10 will see more modern Dennis Darts replace the present minibuses. But U3 (Uxbridge-Heathrow) has been lost by CentreWest and will be taken over by Capital Logistics of Heathrow, a new bus operator for London. It will use large low-floor single-deckers. Finally, U9 (Uxbridge-Harefield West) is also to be lost by CentreWest, and will go to LDT, which will use new midibuses. All the Uxbridge changes are scheduled for next May.

Finally, routes 177 (Abbey Wood-Peckham) and 386 (Greenwich-Woolwich) have both been retained by Stagecoach Selkent from May next, unusually on five-year gross cost contracts. Route 386 will gain new minibuses.

In Brief

Good news for exponents of integration — and maybe also ordinary public transport users — is the announcement that many as yet unspecified Jubilee line stations will have impressive bus stations as part of their complexes, to facilitate easy bus/tube interchange.

Two of the three seasonal Christmas park-&-ride services have gone to different operators this year. Metrobus is operating B99, the Bromley park-&-ride, which is now daily until 11 January. Tellings Golden Miller is working Saturdays-only K60 between North Kingston and the town centre, while London & Country is again running K50 between Chessington and Kingston on Mondays to Saturdays.

Cowie Leaside's night route N29 has been short-listed for the best marketing initiative award in a national competition staged by The Bus Industry Awards.

A study commissioned by the London boroughs of Wandsworth and Richmond-upon-Thames and LT Buses and carried out by WS Atkins concludes that traffic levels across London could be reduced by 40% by 2011 if appropriate measures were taken to discourage car use and encourage more use of public transport, cycling and walking.



New to Westlink is VA11, an Alexander (Belfast)-bodied Volvo Olympian for route 57 (Kingston-Streatham Hill). It is seen at Kingston. GEOFF RIXON

Getting there

'Croydon town centre still open for buses' is the hardly catchy title of a display panel that has appeared in the timetable displays at most bus stops in and around Croydon. It is, of course, all connected with Tramlink, the preliminary works for which are causing many road closures and diversions, despite the efforts of those involved to avoid the worst of the sort of problems that occurred when Sheffield's network was under construction.

One can't help feeling a slight note of desperation in the title, and of course it is easier (if slower) to reach central parts of Croydon by bus than by car. Even so, some of the temporary diversions involved border on the farcical. One recent one involved two circuits of the same big roundabout complex, with a strange dive-off before reaching the same roundabout again. It does, however, ensure that drivers have to stay awake just to make sure they remember which circuit they are on. Three times round would be a bit much.



Seen at Wembley on Metropolitan Line rail-replacement duty is ex-South Yorkshire Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean JKW 303W, one of a number of 'foreign' double-deckers in use on 25 October. This vehicle, now owned by Kelly Coaches in North London, normally performs a more exotic task!

PHILIP LAMB

MILLAR'S *Tales*

ALAN MILLAR'S MONTHLY COLUMN OF
MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Whatever happened to...? ...Omnicoach

A year ago, we were telling you of the latest setback in the tale of the Omni, the promising front-wheel-drive lowfloor minibus — Britain's first lowfloor bus, it's often forgotten — which never made it into the mainstream.

Back in 1988, Omni's founders set up City Vehicle Engineering on a development site in Sildon, Co Durham with plans to build a British version of Austrian manufacturer Steyr-Daimler-Puch's upmarket minibus. They hoped to cash in on the minibus boom with a vehicle that possessed unique features and they set about incorporating a wide choice of features like Perkins and Land Rover engines.

They were too late into the market to win instant big orders from bus fleets which, by then, were developing more permanent ideas of the sorts of minibuses they wanted to run. But they did rather better in what used to be known as the welfare market but

which political correctness insists on calling community transport and other less negative terms. Fleet managers there were won over by the Omni's ability to kneel at the back and take on passengers without recourse to electric hoists. Their passengers could ride with dignity.

Unfortunately, the Omni wasn't very good at standing the pace and unreliability limited orders. Despite selling over 400 buses, its manufacturer was still losing out to less ideal, but more dependable van conversions.

The original CVE company became Omnicoch along the way, but was in the hands of administrative receivers last autumn. It was bought earlier this year by FTL Omni, a new venture that is concentrating on aftermarket support for the existing vehicles and which hopes one day to supply Omni chassis to bodybuilders. We've still to hear of any being built.

Blame it on the Csepel

If Gavin Booth, renowned editor of *Classic Bus* and regular contributor to these pages, is looking a shade stooped, rest assured that it's nothing genetic. When I met up with him at Coach & Bus '97, he was trying unsuccessfully to squeeze his six foot frame into the back of the prototype Neoplan-bodied Csepel lowfloor single-decker. When he returns from the osteopath, he's happy to offer his services to bus designers.

Schoolkids on Guildford & West Surrey's 461 have discovered that the rear of low-floor buses are great for impromptu cabarets to entertain passengers down below! Though not averse to a song and dance routine himself, in this case *Classic Bus* editor Gavin Booth is ecstatically reliving his youth on lowbridge double-deckers on the Neoplan-bodied Csepel at Coach & Bus.



Arriva offends notable departee

I have every confidence that Cowie's transmutation into Arriva, and its decision to give its buses outside London a single livery with no roots in its past, will excite and divide those of you who feel moved to pen letters to the editor.

To nail my colours to the mast, I think I'm more with Arriva than tradition on this one for, if we buy goods, entrust our money and buy holiday packages in the main from strongly-branded businesses presenting the same face from Cornwall to Caithness, there must be a similar case for nationally-branded buses.

Even so, I'll be sorry to see the end of such tradition as Maidstone & District — a name that, if you think about the areas the company serves, is as irrelevant as Arriva is meaningless across linguistic frontiers — and I'll miss the snazzy 'eighties styles of Northumbria and London & Country. But I suspect the rush to extinguish local brands began the day a Cowie director first set eyes on North Western's clashing primary hues of red, blue and yellow.

The acid test, of course, is whether a) Mrs Miggins in Acacia Avenue makes more bus trips with Arriva brand than she did when they were painted in Trogtown Toadstool's delicate bands of

violet, carbolic and bandage, b) Mr Miggins can be persuaded to leave his Arriva lease car in the drive and catch a new DAF to town, and c) their pension fund managers will invest in Arriva shares.

According to *The Times*, Sir Tom Cowie, ex-chairman of the group that no longer bears his name, is an Arrivasceptic. Correction, an Arrivaphobe. 'This is a pathetic snipe at me. It's ludicrous, wasteful and vindictive, but this typifies the kind of idiots I have unfortunately left running the company', he thundered at The Thunderer's reporter who, I suspect, had a good idea of the sort of quotable quote he was going to get before he dialled Sir Tom's number.

Unfortunately, our premier national newspaper seems less hot on numbers than words. The Arriva name, that same story concluded, will be put on every one of Cowie's 77,000 [sic] buses. That's at least 70,000 more than we thought it owned and more than the official PSV population of the entire UK.

But will Arriva, apropos my Tales of four issues back, replace 'Cowie' on Midland Bluebird destination blinds in Stirling?

Philately that gets you anywhere

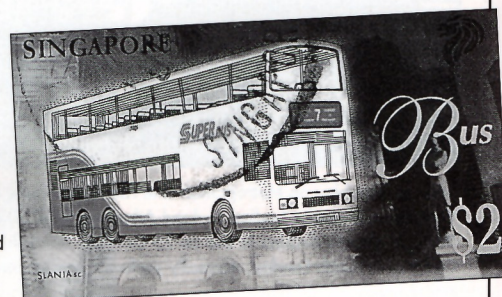
A long-running feature in this magazine used to unearth a seemingly unimaginable selection of examples of buses on postage stamps around the globe.

If the subject interested you, I'm happy to say that philatelic buses didn't disappear when the series of articles ended and reader Mark Jameson has sent in this example of a \$2 stamp from Singapore showing a very passable image of an air-conditioned Alexander-bodied Volvo Olympian. As you would expect of a state that forbids chewing gum on its Metro, there was never any question of this bus being painted the wrong way round.

It's one of a set of 13

transport stamps issued in March and April this year — the 35 cent shows a prewar trolleybus and there were trains, a tram and a fire engine among the others — which he picked up from Stanley Gibbons for £24.80.

Perhaps our own Royal Mail might come up with something similar.



BUSES

It's an A1 job in Chester

There's a job going just now for a managing director at Chester City Transport. Present incumbent David Clark is retiring and candidates are being wooed by a trade press advertisement offering a decent sounding salary, a location with 'easy links to cosmopolitan centres and breathtaking countryside' and the prospect of running more than 90 buses.

There's even a photograph of a smart modern bus — a Wright Endurance-bodied Volvo B10B — to remind applicants that we're talking public transport here. Only something tells me it's not one of the 90 mentioned in the advert.

For one thing, although Chester's about to get some Wright-bodied Scanias, it's not got any B10Bs. For another, even with the computerised removal of its destination display, Volvo badge, fleetname and registration number, the half dark/half light livery, the reflections in the windscreen, the outline of a following minibus and the exactly identical positions of both bus and its driver tell me it's something we've seen before.

It's uncannily like M1 ABO, (shown below) the last new bus delivered to A1 of Ardrossan before Stagecoach took over, and illustrated in our March 1995 issue.



Farewell, touchy neighbours

By the time you read this, Mrs M and I could be surrounded by packing cases and talking incessantly of exchanging contracts and completion dates. We're about to move 350 miles north from rural Cambridgeshire to suburban Glasgow in search of some of the buzz of my native city that we both love well.

So after 10 years, it's bye bye to Basingstoke, a pleasant little spot on the Hertfordshire border and the first place in my life where buses actually go past my front gate. Of course, I like that and can make a fair stab at guessing the time as I wake to a Stagecoach Cambus double-decker whizzing (or whatever you care to call the noise a bus makes these days) past on its way to turn at the top of the village.

The Royston Flyer, usually an Olympian coach, struts its stuff a few minutes after seven as it begins its commuter run into Cambridge and is a great back-up for the alarm clock. But my enthusiasm and occasional use of the hourly bus service is at odds with the views of a few neighbours. The daytime layover

spot had to be moved a couple of years back, from the road end and houses with real people to a free-range pig farm, because two neighbours — car users sans exception — lobbied Cambus to stop having their view blocked by VRs.

On the very day we accepted an offer for our house, I found the *Cambridge Evening News* telling me that a householder round the corner has complained about screeching brakes disturbing her slumbers at 7.10am. With commendable haste and a good grasp of public relations, Cambus managing director John Steel — who has since taken early retirement and I wish him well — announced that the squeak had already been traced and eliminated.

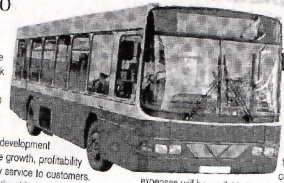
This near neighbour, I fear, might also prefer that there was no bus at all. I hope she takes an equally strict line in complaining when residents propel their powerful Bavarian luxury saloons at well over the 30mph speed limit before a more dramatic screeching of brakes disturbs everyone's sleep.

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CHESTER
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MOVING PEOPLE

CHESTER CITY TRANSPORT LTD.

MOVING FORWARD

This bus advertising the md's job at Chester looks suspiciously like Volvo M1 ABO for A1!

PHOTO: ROBERT WRIGHT & SON

20 YEARS AGO

Our December 1977 front cover was graced by the picture of a bus that never was. Well, it was, but it never became, if you follow my logic.

This was a prototype Van Hool-bodied single-deck citybus for Coras Iompair Eireann, the Irish state transport company and it had been taken to London in October that year to let the British press and, I guess, some operators have a good look at it.

It was meant to be the first of an initial order for 118 urban single-deckers with two-stroke Detroit Diesel engines and Allison transmissions imported from General Motors in the United States. The integral body was built in Belgium, but production models were to be built at the Van Hool McArdle joint venture plant set up in Dublin.

As Irish Journey correspondent Michael Corcoran had reported in the April issue, CIE was fed up to the back teeth with its all-Leyland fleet and the Van Hool citybus was the first stage of its divorce from its traditional supplier. It was also going to be the first stage in a plan to turn Ireland into one of the European Community's bus exporters.

CIE chairman Dr Liam St John Devlin had announced plans to follow the 118 citybuses with Van Hool McArdle/GM double-deckers and inter-urban coaches and, indeed, to replace its entire fleet with them by 1986. 'We believe these buses will be among the best in Europe,' he crowed.

Alas, it was not to be. CIE and Van Hool fell out so badly and so quickly that, if the single-deck prototype ever made it to Dublin, it was never put in service and seems to have been quietly buried in a Belgian field. Production of Van Hool McArdle bodies ground to a halt, CIE's fleet renewal problems piled up as it steadfastly refused to buy more Leylands and Ireland struggled to revive its bus manufacturing dreams.

New prototypes came from Germany and names like Bombardier and GAC filled Van Hool's breach, but that is a story best left for another day. And it also ended in tears.



Van Hool's Detroit Diesel-powered prototype for CIE in 1977.

STEPHEN MORRIS reports on a radical and far-reaching new look for the Cowie Group throughout Britain

ARRIVA ARRIVES

New corporate image for Cowie

Once upon a time there was a National Bus Company. It threatened — and succeeded to some extent — to wipe out the former identities of the many bus companies in England and Wales and impose its own upon them. Drab reds and greens replaced the myriad hues which went before. The amalgamation of certain of its South Wales companies into a new National Welsh hinted at further corporatism to come, but NBC lost heart and for the most part kept traditional, long-established names in place.

Then came fragmentation and privatisation of NBC and new images, freed from the austere, regulated hand of nationalised industry, returned the industry to its kaleidoscopic days of yore — if not more so. But now, it seems, we are coming full circle, and days of corporatism are back with us.

Firstly it was Stagecoach which decided to extend the image devised for the brash little company based in Perth so that its stripes circled the earth. Like them or loathe them, they at least create a brighter, crisper image than NBC drab ever managed. FirstBus never seemed quite sure; some companies adapted the former Grampian livery in different colour combinations, some which looked distinguished, and some which looked a mess, others used schemes bearing some relation to the old Badgerline livery, others did nothing, while corporatism led to a new fleetname style and little 'Welcome to FirstBus' signs, which were so indiscriminate as not to be able to differentiate between buses and trains. Go-Ahead, having introduced very localised liveries in the north-east went the other way with a new corporate scheme, but only in the north-east, so far, anyway.

Which left Cowie.

The rise of Cowie

The Cowie Group began life in a back street in Sunderland in the 1930s selling secondhand motorcycles, a business which blossomed in the postwar years and graduated into car sales



during the 1960s, with Austin, Morris, Vauxhall and Rootes dealerships. In 1981 it took over the Ewer Group, which, rather uncomfortably, brought with it a coach firm, Grey-Green and its various subsidiaries. Grey-Green was seen as something of an embarrassment, but as no-one else was in a hurry to take it off Cowie's hands and it was a 'nice little earner', Cowie hung on to it. Diversification into the London bus tender market, especially with a high-profile gain of the first London bus contract for a major

central London service, 24, to pass to an independent, and subsequent acclaim for the standard of its operation, was a significant move for Grey-Green, which quickly transformed itself from a coach operator to a bus operator.

A last-ditch effort by the expanding Cowie Group to sell Grey-Green fell through, and the group's chief executive, Gordon Hodgson, resigned himself to being stuck with buses. Thus when London Buses was privatised it gained Leaside, and was also persuaded to

Above: Grey-Green has applied Arriva logos to its fleet. An Alexander-bodied Volvo Citybus is seen passing through Parliament Square on Route 24. When the contract to operate this service was won by Grey-Green in 1989, no-one would have predicted that it would lead to the formation of Arriva, a company operating almost 7,000 buses.

PHILIP LAMB

pick up the pieces of South London after an unfortunately-timed savaging from the Traffic Commissioner was a large fly in the otherwise smooth ointment of the London Buses sell-off.

Suddenly buses were a major business for this car dealership and leasing group; other smallish acquisitions were made before the troubled British Bus group was bought in August 1996, shooting Cowie up the league table of bus groups.

British Bus, whose story is told in *Buses Yearbook 1998*, was a real mixture of bus companies from all over Britain and there was certainly no evidence of much corporate policy shown in its operations. Thus Cowie ended up running 6,600 buses, owning about 600 further buses and coaches which were leased to a wide range of operators by Hughes-DAF, leasing 77,000 cars to big businesses through Cowie Interleasing and selling some 50,000 cars a year through its car dealerships. It had 140 different brands and sub-brands, more than 90 of them on its bus companies. It is now a group with a turnover in excess of £1.1 billion, listed on the Stock Exchange and is one of the top 200 companies in Britain. City investors are very important to it, and City investors are simple folk who don't like the confusion of 140 different brand names within their investments. Add to that the problems and expense of protecting so many brand names, and the fact that around 300-400 buses are transferred between subsidiaries each year, and

all, apparently, needing repainting. Thus Cowie has decided to go for a corporate image. A new name is to cover all its operations, whether it's renting a DAF to a coach operator for a few weeks, or a Nissan to a car driver for day or two or leasing it to his firm; or indeed whether it's a Grey-Green, Clydeside or North Western bus.

The new name is 'Arriva'.

Arrival of Arriva

Why 'Arriva'?, you may, with some justification, ask. Cowie — or Arriva, we should say — is listed in the FT Share Index under Transport, and has concluded that all its business is involved in supplying 'transport solutions', whether that be selling you a car, renting a bus to your local bus operator or picking you up at the bus stop. Cowie has identified that the whole object of transport is to arrive, hence the name, which also translates into other languages better than does 'Cowie', and, according to Arriva's corporate communications director Robert Blower, in the 15 languages surveyed it means nothing rude in any of them. The group predicts expansion in Europe, by acquisition and by joint venture, and indeed already has Unibus, a recently-acquired Copenhagen operator. It also predicts further expansion in the UK bus business by acquisition.

The company has discovered, as other bus companies which take the trouble to research such things — a ride on the average bus will usually suffice — that the majority of its bus passengers are women, while — shock, horror — so are 50% of its car customers and 33% of its car fleet managers. So 'Arriva' has been chosen for its 'more feminine style and value'. Well, that goes without saying, doesn't it?

Its other advantage is it is 'alphabetically favoured'. Its disadvantage would appear to be that it is not immediately obvious how one should pronounce it, and on the corporate video produced to announce it, reactions of bus

passengers in North London to the name showed a number pronouncing it to rhyme with 'driver', rather than the correct way which is 'arreever'.

Each strand of the business has its own name within the 'Arriva' family, so the bus operations are Arriva Passenger Services, whereas Hughes-DAF is renamed Arriva Bus & Coach. This has the advantage of distancing it from DAF, of which it is the UK importer. Hughes-DAF has been the procurer of buses for all Cowie's operations since August 1996, so quite apart from bodybuilders has latterly supplied Volvo, Dennis, Scania and Mercedes-Benz vehicles as well as DAF, and indeed it offers Dennis Darts to other customers as DAF is not represented in that sector of the market. However in the future it would appear that DAF will be the most strongly favoured supplier of large buses to Arriva Passenger Services, and large orders have already been placed for low-floor DAF double-deckers, to be bodied by Alexander with its new ALX400 body, and by Plaxton as well as Optare's new version of the Spectra.

A corporate approach

All of the Arriva Passenger Services operations will run not only with a corporate livery, which, it is planned, will sweep away all local liveries within three years, but the local company names within the group will also disappear in favour of 'Arriva', achieving a level of corporatism never before seen in the bus industry, not even in NBC days. Thus such long-established names as Maidstone & District, United, West Riding and Yorkshire Woollen District will disappear, as will products of privatisation such as North Western, Northumbria, Midland Fox, London & Country and Clydeside, of deregulation, such as Starline, Bee Line, more recent names such as The Shires with its range of local unit names, and even well-known former independents like Grey-Green and McGills and former municipalities Southend Transport and Colchester Borough Transport.

There will be a single livery for all operations outside London, a rather attractive turquoise with a cream frontal area and a yellow stripe, designed by none other than Ray Stenning of Best Impressions, who had designed liveries for Grey-Green and a number of the British Bus companies, including London & Country, Kentish Bus, The Shires and, only this year, Maidstone & District. The



Left:

In accordance with rules laid down by London Transport, buses operating within or in and out of the central area must remain, or be painted, predominately red. Thus the existing scheme with yellow diagonal bands at the rear, will be retained on Leaside and South London vehicles, at least for the time being, and be subsequently applied to relevant vehicles from other Arriva fleets. M689, a Leaside Metrobus, carries the London scheme. R. GOODRUM

Above left:

The only vehicle available for our inspection in the new corporate livery was this Volvo B6/Plaxton from the Maidstone & District fleet. STEPHEN MORRIS



operations, the south-east, the Midlands, the north-west and the north, which would include Yorkshire Bus (West Riding, Yorkshire Woollen, Selby & District and South Yorkshire), United, Northumbria, Clydeside, GMS and McGills.

In London, the current red livery with upswept yellow stripes, as used by South London and Leaside, will prevail and will also encompass what was Grey-Green, with the Arriva logo used in white; indeed the new logo began to appear on buses in London from 11 October.

fleetname Arriva is in white capitals with a strapline beneath — the only concession to local identity, though even here the old fleetnames will not feature. The Maidstone & District Volvo B6 used at the launch carried the strapline 'through Kent & Sussex', and it is understood that similar straplines will be developed for operations in other areas, though they will not reflect the old company names and indeed there will be circumstances where buses from adjacent garages in two separate companies may have the same strapline, which may differ from those used on buses elsewhere in the same company. There is a new logo, rather reminiscent of the Centro logo used by West Midlands PTE, intended to depict 'wheels within wheels'.

It is understood that the companies will remain as legal entities, even if their fleetnames are no longer used. Moreover something of a regional group structure is becoming evident, such as the London

Thus for the first time Britain will have a truly national bus company with no real differentiation between areas. Part of the object of the exercise is to achieve economies of scale, so no doubt the types of bus acquired by Arriva Passenger Services through Arriva Bus & Coach will become standardised. At present there is no talk of a corporate interior style, as there is at FirstBus, though this would seem an inevitable next step. Fortunately the style that has been adopted is reasonably attractive and presents a quality look.

However any operator which forgets that bus operation is entirely a localised, not a national, business is on dangerous ground. No doubt local management will stay put and keep its ear close to the ground; but a national corporate approach can seem at odds with the local nature of bus operation — especially where familiar names are to be swept away in a way which not even Stagecoach has dared to try.

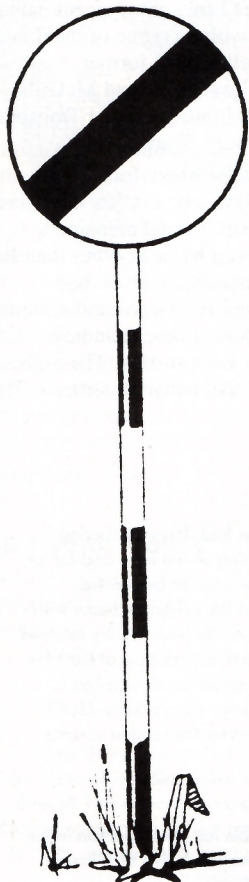
FORMER COWIE GROUP BUS COMPANIES IN BRITAIN

NOW ARRIVA PASSENGER SERVICES

Bee Line
Clydeside
Colchester Borough Transport
County Bus
Crosville Cymru
GMS
Grey-Green
Guildford & West Surrey
Hunters of Seaton Delaval
Kentish Bus
Leaside
Liverline
London & Country
Londonlinks
Luton & District Transport (The Shires)
Maidstone & District
McGills of Barrhead
Midland Fox
Midland Red North
North Western
Northumbria Motor Services
South London
Southend Transport
Starline
Stevensons, Uttoxeter
Tees & District
United
Yorkshire Bus
(West Riding, Yorkshire Woollen, Selby & District, South Yorkshire)

Above left:

Metrolink M6 of Leaside is acting as a publicity vehicle in a Contravision scheme.
STEPHEN MORRIS



Each month nine area News Sheets are produced which between them cover the whole of the British Isles. The different Counties within each give details of operators under Major, other and non PSV headings, the nine are: Greater London, South Eastern, South Western, Midlands, Eastern, North Western, Northern, Wales & Republic of Ireland and Scotland & Northern Ireland.

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- **SUP36H - London's Major Operators Fleet Allocation** (up to date to October 1997) - £3.00 (£2.00 to members)
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Histories of two independents, new handbooks and preserved buses in colour

FOWLERS TRAVEL OF HOLBEACH DROVE

G R MILLS. MW TRANSPORT PUBLICATIONS. A5 format. 48PP £7.95

There is a growing trend in fleet history publications, largely followed in this book, to recount the story by means of pictures. In fact, some 34 pages of this 48-page volume are given over to pictures of vehicles with comprehensive captioning.

The centre pages contain a map, showing present day services, and a diagram, detailing the layout of the premises at Dog Drove. The book is well produced on glossy paper, the reproduction of the photographs being to a very acceptable standard. The general, technical quality of the views is good too — my only criticism would be that there is a high proportion of static record shots, with many taken at the depot, denying us the opportunity to appreciate the fleet fully in its working environment.

However, the Fowler's story is fully told from the early days in 1947, when the founder started a modest business, through to today's, comprehensive operation. A detailed overview of services is included, an easy-to-understand fleet summary also being provided.

With an increasing number of books available today, all competing for our hard-earned cash, many may consider £7.99 for a 48-page small, soft-back book comparatively expensive, but, if you are a 'Fowler fan' it is essential reading. PHILIP LAMB

JOHN FISHWICK & SONS 1907-1997

DAVID PRESCOTT. SENIOR PUBLICATIONS. A4 format. 96PP £11.95

This soft-back book was published to coincide with Fishwick's 90th anniversary. Its author, a former engine development engineer at Leyland, who now drives vintage and modern coaches for a living, has had a lifelong interest in coaches and buses, and has spent the last 15 years or so researching material for this publication.

There are altogether almost 200 photographs, demonstrating the current trend, when it comes to this kind of publication. Virtually every type operated is, therefore, illustrated, some more times than is necessary. There is an abundance of views taken in the company's yards at Golden Hill, and at Chapel Brow. With space for so many illustrations, I would prefer a better balance, with more vehicles seen in service. There are, however amongst this multitude some excellent and unusual shots.

The text is clearly written, telling the Fishwick story in a logical and methodical fashion. The emphasis of the narrative leans heavily towards the vehicles operated. The text is followed by a re-telling of this chronology using photographs, these being grouped together to illustrate types, eras and sometimes locations. Within the photographs, there is a bus section, followed by one dealing with coaches. Strangely there is, sandwiched between the two, a chapter entitled *Reminiscences* made up entirely of text, and looking a little misplaced.

A curious omission is a summary of routes operated, but there are detailed fleet tables, laid out spaciouly on the pages. The book concludes with a resume of service vehicles, and of demonstrators over the past ten years.

It is well produced, using good quality paper, and is fairly reasonably priced at £11.95. The layout and design work is, in part, however, difficult to reconcile. Nevertheless this is a worthy volume, and judging by the extent of the company's following amongst the enthusiast fraternity, is sure to do well.

PHILIP LAMB

THE IRELAND AND ISLANDS BUS HANDBOOK

BRITISH BUS PUBLISHING. 210mm x 190mm. 144pp £9.95

Well, they keep on coming — just when you think there can't be any more, along comes another one. Unlike the last bus, the supply of handbooks from this prolific publisher, is never ending! Here we have a new title. Herein listed are the fleets of operators, both large and small in the Republic of Ireland, Ulster, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. It cannot be easy to put together such a work — information, and photographs from these far flung outposts of the British bus scene are not easy to come by, so first of all, I commend British Bus Publishing for undertaking such a task.

The book follows the same format as others in the series, with operators listed in alphabetical order under their respective geographical headings. Appropriate photographs are included to illustrate the fleets. Apart from the major Irish cities, most of the area covered by this book is sparsely populated and far-flung. This is borne out by the high proportion of coaches and low-capacity vehicles illustrated. The book points out that no photographs were available for Alderney, and we noticed that some of those used elsewhere were more out of date than one would normally expect in this series.

However, this is a much-welcome addition to this ever-growing range of books, popular within the industry, and with the enthusiast. A good buy at £9.95.

YORKSHIRE

BUS HANDBOOK

BRITISH BUS PUBLISHING. 210mm x 190mm. 160PP £12.50

The latest edition of this title conforms to the well established formula mentioned above, listing all major, and significant minor operators within Yorkshire. It is also produced to the high standard to which we have become accustomed, with a good selection of high quality photographs supporting a detailed analysis of vehicles in each fleet. Again value at £12.50.

Bus handbooks reviewed by PHILIP LAMB

BUS SCENE IN COLOUR

PRESERVED BUSES

GAVIN BOOTH AND PETER DURHAM, IAN ALLAN PUBLISHING 245mm x 190mm. 80pp £12.99

No other full-colour bus book so far produced has reached the standard of photography and printing of this one. There is not a poor — nor a hardly less good — picture among them. As many know, Peter Durham's pictures are exceptional, and the result of much time and trouble taken with each exposure. However, he does appear to be luckier than most of us, in that it never rains on the days when he takes photographs!

Accompanying each picture is a concise and accurate description with an acknowledgement to the owner, group or driver who helped make the picture possible. Such is Peter Durham's reputation that he receives many invitations to photograph a particular vehicle. One result of this is that only two of more than 90 pictures of buses and trolleybuses depicted have more than one passenger! Naturally rural or garage locations predominate, but there are a few delightful townscapes. And anyone who has misgivings about the future of the preservation movement should be reassured by this book. The immaculate vehicles it shows are of every conceivable shape, size and colour from Mike Sutcliffe's 1908 Leyland X2 type to the Oxford Bus Museum's 1977 Bristol VRT.

The pictures cover the country, from the far West of England to East Anglia, through urban and rural Wales and as far north as Aberdeen. AECs, Bristols and Leylands inevitably take the lion's share but smaller makes such as Albion, Maudslay and Thornycroft are not forgotten, and products of smaller bodybuilders such as Abbott of Farnham, Windover and Wilks & Meade are also featured. Even the minor detail of the pictures, such as destination displays, is worth a second glance. There is the Huddersfield Corporation Sunbeam trolleybus with 'football ground' as destination and 'fare 3d' in the route number box, and a Southern National Bristol LL5G with a white blank in the ultimate destination box, 'service no' in the intermediate display and '253' as the route number.

In a sentence the cream of preserved buses are depicted in a series of superb photographs. JOHN ALDRIDGE



Trent is a company which is committed to investment in the quality of its operations. It has had further influxes of new vehicles over the summer, including its first Mercedes Vario minibuses.

PHILIP LAMB photographed some on a recent visit to Derby and Burton-on-Trent.

NEW TO





TRENT

Vintage Corner

Opposite above:

Trent has standardised on the Plaxton-bodied Dennis Dart SLF, and has recently had a new batch of 20. Some have replaced Optare Vectas on the Spondon Flyer, and others Optare Deltas on routes into Derby from Matlock and Belper. Also cascaded are Northern Counties-bodied Volvo B10Bs on the Ilkeston - Sawley service. One of the new low floor buses, 930 (R930 RAU) is seen passing the Council House in Derby.

Opposite:

Five new Plaxton Interurban-bodied Volvo B10Ms took over operation of the Red Arrow half-hourly Nottingham-Derby service on 22 September. The service has been extended to Chesterfield every hour, via Ripley and Alfreton. 63 (R63 RAU) is about to leave Derby for Nottingham.

Above:

The Mercedes Vario is becoming a familiar sight now. Trent has placed ten (nine short and one long) with Plaxton Beaver 2 bodywork in service lately. In fleet livery is 276 (R276 RAU)

Above right:

Another Vario from the same batch, 275 (R275 RAU), has a dedicated livery for the X38 non-stop service from Derby to Burton, where it was seen on 22 September last.



Trent's double-deck fleet is diminishing, but one Atlantean is still in service on a school contract for John Port School, Derby, with a regular driver. The ECW body of 571 (ONN 571P) was damaged in the infamous Derby depot fire when new in 1976, and was heavily rebuilt by Willowbrook, before returning to service at Melbourne on the Derby service. After being replaced by newer vehicles with power steering it went to Barton at Melton Mowbray and is now back at Derby.

D. J. STANIER

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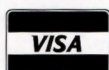
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Attractiveness: Very attractive ☐

Attractive ☐

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Comprehensive ☐ Sec. Modern ☐

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(tick which traits closely describe you)

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(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank)

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- ☐ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
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5. Your interests

(sections 5. and 6. Please tick for a like, cross for dislike or leave blank for no preference.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wine/Dining | <input type="checkbox"/> Jazz/Folk music |
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Minimum age: _____ Maximum age: _____

Height: min. _____ max. _____ Don't mind ☐

Marital status:

Single ☐ Divorced ☐

Widowed ☐ Separated ☐

Don't mind ☐

Build: Slight ☐

Medium ☐

Large ☐

Attractiveness: Very attractive ☐

Attractive ☐

Average ☐



Dept. BUS 03



Dateline

DAIMLER

Rides again in Burton

As part of the Burton Festival in September, Midland Red/Stevensons provided a heritage bus service, using a newly-restored former Burton Corporation double-decker. The Massey-bodied Daimler CCG5 was rescued for preservation in 1991. Having been expertly restored over a long period at Stevensons' Spath depot, it emerged on 5 September with MoT to full PCV standards in good time to operate the service on 18/19 and 22-26 September.



Town Tour

The service linked the Bass Museum with Marstons Brewery on a circuitous route through the centre of the town. With a flat fare of 50p, plenty to see on route and a complete round trip, starting and finishing at Marstons Brewery, lasting almost two hours, an interesting package was on offer. The route did cover the same ground for part of the circuit, so it was possible to make a shorter trip if desired.

The service inspired some local interest, as well as providing visitors with an extra attraction, over and above the town's regular ones. The service was crew operated, the venture being overseen by Keith West, Stevensons Customer Services Manager at Burton, who had taken leave from his regular job to act as conductor for the duration, issuing tickets from an authentic TIM machine.

Last crew operation

Crewed buses last operated in Burton in December 1989, under the auspices of Stevensons, which, in 1985, took over the operations of East Staffordshire District Council, the post-1974 successor to the Corporation. The District Council itself had previously ceased crew operation in January 1981.

The 1964 Daimler CCG5, 87 (TFA 987), had a relatively short working life at Burton, being replaced in 1973 by a Willowbrook-bodied Daimler Fleetline. Burton had been primarily a Guy operator and after Guy and Daimler merged under Jaguar ownership it was intended that Guy's Arab model should be replaced by Daimlers offering the Guy constant-mesh gearbox in place of the more sophisticated preselector which had been their standard for more than 30 years. While Guy production did in fact continue Burton was one of a small number of operators to change over. By 1964 standards the specification of the CCG5, with constant-mesh gearbox and five-cylinder seven-litre Gardner 5LW engine was positively archaic.

Upon withdrawal, No87 passed to McLennans of Spitalfield, where it was employed mainly on schools work. During its time there, it was fitted with a re-circulatory heater in the lower saloon — clearly Scottish schoolgirls lack the hardiness of those in the brewery trade! Following McLennan's takeover by Stagecoach, the Daimler continued with that company as a training vehicle, passing next to Moffat & Williamson, and then, via Cosgrove, dealer, to Bains of Old Meldrum, where it was used intermittently. It finally passed into preservation, whilst in the hands of another dealer, Wilson of Motherwell.

Left:

Burton No87 pauses outside Burton Town Hall on 22 September last.
PHILIP LAMB

Above:

Identical No90 (BFA 590B) is seen in service in Burton Town Centre, whilst on route 2 to Harper Avenue. It was dispatched to McLennan's in company with No87 in 1973.

PLAXTON WINNERS

After very careful deliberations the judges in the Plaxton P-reg photographic competition, to celebrate Plaxton's 90th anniversary (*Buses August*) we are now able to announce the winners!

Top right:
Overall winner was **RUSSELL UPCRAFT** with this fine study of a Limebourne Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLF at Aldgate on London Transport service 42. He wins a weekend break for two at the Black Swan in Helmsley.

Right:
The first of two runners-up is **RICHARD WALTER** with a Lowland Dart SLF, in SMT livery, at Musselburgh in July.

Below right:
Also a runner-up is **TONY WILSON**, with this shot of a Première 320-bodied Dennis Javelin of Slack, Tansley, near Ashover in Derbyshire.

Below:
Not actually a winner, but commended for his cheek, is **MARTYN HEARSON** of Knotty Bus & Coach, who says, 'Nobody said which end of the registration plate the P had to be!' His firm has three P-reg Plaxtons, all AEC Reliances, including NNN 9P, new to Derby City Transport.



YOU WRITE

London midibuses, hail and ride and problems with long single-deckers

London — an operator replies

From: Peter Hendy, managing director, CentreWest London Buses Ltd

I really do think that your correspondents need to be better informed if they are to write about London's Buses. Firstly I find Alan Millar ('Millar's Tales', November 1997) writing about a journey from Euston Square to Kings Cross. He says there are four routes to choose from; but actually route 18 has not travelled further than Euston Station for some time now, and it is therefore rather unreasonable to expect it to carry him to a place it does not go! Needless to say, there is little point in fitting a Countdown monitor at the last stop before the terminus. I recommend that Mr. Millar uses the excellent travel information provided by London Transport to establish just which route he is taking and to where.

On the previous page ('In London'), your correspondent, John Aldridge, says that the Mercedes-Benz midibus has not been very popular in London. Mr Aldridge ought to know better. The Mercedes 811 has been in service in London to the tune of at least a couple of hundred examples, and the fact that they are leaving for other parts of the United Kingdom merely reflects the fact that London Transport tenders have increasingly required new vehicles. Sending Mercedes 811s with life left in them to Strathclyde, and to Eastern Counties is no more than common sense, and does not imply a lack of popularity; indeed, compared with a Mercedes 608, these buses are very popular in Norwich! We deliberately decided to transfer the Renault S75 buses to Beeline, to replace time expired Leyland Nationals, precisely because we were keen on them and they have a number of years life left.

John Aldridge also refers to summer holiday schedules. They have in fact been in operation in London for a number of years now, reflecting not staffing shortages but a reduction in passenger traffic during the school holidays. John Aldridge also comments about the 8.5m Dart being 'a special short length that LT insisted it needed in the early days'. Has Mr Aldridge not heard of the former driving licence regulations, with a special category for under 8.5m long vehicles, or has he forgotten that!

to BUSES
Coombelands House
Addlestone
Weybridge
Surrey KT15 1HY
Fax: 01932 854750

More defence of London midis

From: Joe Gilchrist, managing director, Leicester Citybus

I refer to your editorial in *Buses* September where you refer to Leicester Citybus using Renault S75s transferred from CentreWest. Thirteen of these vehicles were transferred into Leicester Citybus during the summer and replaced nine-year-old Renault S56s and Iveco 49.10s. The S75s have more seats, wide entrances and gangways, air-assisted suspension and front, side and rear routenumbers. The S56s they replaced had TorqueFlight gearboxes which had become unreliable and a major cause for concern.

A number of the S75s had been repainted prior to entering service and it was decided that it would be in our customers' interest to place all 13 vehicles into service and repaint the remainder on an on-going basis. It is not normally our intention to put acquired vehicles into service before repainting; however on this occasion it was our customers who benefited from this decision.

I would also point out that all Optare Prismas at Leicester are fitted with air conditioning, and the high-profile specification of our new Excels is not a 'gesture'.

One of the ex-CentreWest Renault S75s running for Leicester Citybus last August prior to repainting.
STEPHEN MORRIS



Hail-&-Ride?

From: B.J. Cooper, Chingford, London E4
In his excellent column 'In London' (November 1997) John Aldridge states, 'Unfortunately hail and ride seems to be declining.' Why unfortunately? As both a driver and as a passenger, I prefer fixed stops. They are always unquestionably in a safe place and with a bit of luck will have a shelter. Otherwise it can be a case of hail (as in frozen pellets of rain) and wait!

In search of the ideal bus

From: B. Fleming, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

John Aldridge's piece on 'long' single-deckers ('In London', *Buses* August 1997) hit a nerve with me. As a driver in Dublin I have some experience of this type in the guise of the DAF SB220 with Alexander Cetante body. Personally speaking, I find this combination to be one of the most unwieldy and uncomfortable (for the driver) buses to operate. One has only to look at the extremities of long single-deckers to see ample evidence that quarts will not fit in pint pots. In addition it seems to be a feature of the DAF cab area to place the driver well back from the forward extremity of the bus. This, when coupled with eccentric mirror bracketry, leads to a sense of uncertainty when manoeuvring in tight situations.

I feel that there is great scope for an enterprising bodybuilder to devise a midi double-decker with approx 60 seats (no, not the Routemaster!) which would address many of the problems with both long single-deckers and the grossly overcrowded minibuses which now proliferate.

Wrong RTW!

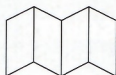
From: Fraser Clayton, Baynards, West Sussex

Regarding your article (*Buses* November) on the Titan Day recently held at Amberley Museum, I was dismayed to see my bus quoted as being RTW23. No such vehicle now exists! My vehicle is RTW185 (KLB 915), which I have owned for over quarter of a century; it is believed to be the only member for the entire RT family to have been on the road every year since manufacture.

Titan Day must have been the best bus rally for a very long time and Amberley Museum must be congratulated on organising such a superb day.

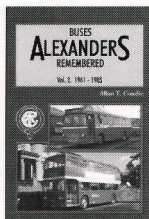
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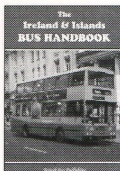
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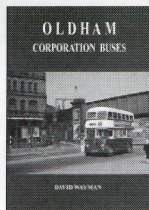


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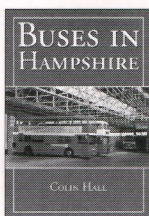
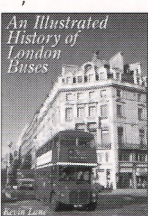
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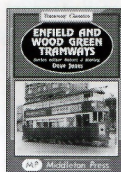
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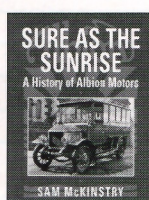
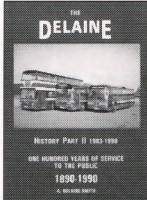


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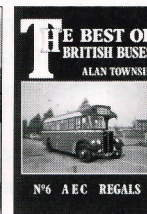
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BUS 97

COACH



The biannual Coach & Bus Shows at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham are increasingly a showcase for the British bus industry at its best. This year's event was possibly the most upbeat yet.

STEPHEN MORRIS and PHILIP LAMB report

Top:
Of the many minicoaches at Coach & Bus '97, one of the most competent was the new Plaxton Cheetah, based on the Mercedes-Benz Vario PL

Above:
Low-floor double-deckers were the most prominent feature of Coach & Bus '97. Dennis showed this Alexander ALX500-bodied Trident for Long Win, the subsidiary of Kowloon Motor Bus which is running the Airbus service to Hong Kong airport.
SM

Above right:
Plaxton's Prima body is now available on the DAF SB3000; this one for The Shires' service 757 London-Luton, was parked outside. The new coaches for this service feature air conditioning.
PL

COACH & BUS 97

In 1995 we suggested that the Coach & Bus Show that year was one of those highly significant shows which happen only once in a generation, when the industry moves on into a new phase. Unfortunately at that stage we hadn't reckoned on an even more significant show two years on . . .

Low-floor double-deckers

It was time to forget gloomy predictions about the state of the coach market and the state of the double-deck bus market; there were new coaches at every turn and at least four new low-floor double-deckers — even if two of those were identical Alexander ALX500-bodied Dennis Tridents for Hong Kong. Hughes-DAF, in its last few days, as it turned out, before becoming Arriva Bus & Coach, had the first low-floor double-decker in the colours of a UK operator, Travel West Midlands. TWM has ordered two prototypes, and the other is to go to Dundee; other low-floor double-deckers will follow from other manufacturers for evaluation and for the moment the operator continues along its single-deck path, with 200 on order, though has ordered 20 more Spectras.

The other low-floor double-decker was the most revolutionary, the Plaxton President on something which had been described as the 'Volvo Olympian SLF'; Volvo was saying nothing about the chassis, but it certainly wasn't an Olympian and one might expect a few well-chosen words from Dennis on the subject of the 'SLF' designation!

Of course the manufacturers wanted us all to *think* that their's was the first low-floor double-decker, but there were all sorts of clever double-deck designs with step-free saloons in the 1950s and 1960s, including early Atlanteans and Fleetlines following on from front-engined models — and even including the dreaded Guy Wulfrunian!

Of the new crop, which are of course designed with accessibility in mind, rather than the ability to get under low bridges, so far the new Volvo/Plaxton seems to offer the least compromise, though Dennis's forthcoming 'Trident 2', as they seem to be calling it internally (it follows on from the Trident 3, for three axles, not the Trident 1, incidentally!) was not at the show and so we can't yet pass judgement. It's due to go into production next October. But for all the massiveness of the Hong Kong Tridents, and the impressive looks of the new Alexander ALX500 body, we were rather surprised that only four seats, two of them of the tip-up variety, could be reached without encountering a step. British-specification single-door double-deckers should fare rather better in this respect. Also slightly surprising was the use of pvc for the high-backed seating, which contrasted with the universal moquette on show everywhere else.

Growing wider

If 320mm step heights were one dimension on everyone's mind (though Optare's new Solo swoops in at a class-beating 250mm), then another figure, ostensibly less impressive, was the new 2,550mm width allowance. This is not yet universal in Europe — France in particular is sticking at 2.5m — so not all the new coaches were built to the new width, including Van Hool's impressive new-generation Alizée.

One of the stranger-looking vehicles was this Indcar Maxim-bodied Iveco Euromidi 29-seater.

SM

Plaxton was claiming to be the first to build a bus to 2.55m, with the low-floor President, though Alexander's new ALX300 is also built to the new width. This is to be built on MAN low-floor chassis for Stagecoach, but the show vehicle was one of 22 on Volvo B10BLE for Busways. Dual-purpose seating was fitted, yet the gangway was of the sort of width usually associated with much skimpier seats and those extra 5cm made a huge difference.

It was also good to be able to board Berkhof's new Radial coach, on a Dennis Javelin, and walk the full length of the gangway with camera gear slung over the shoulder and not have to turn awkwardly or bash the seats. Such was the sense of space and opulence that resulted, we hadn't appreciated that this was actually a low-cost vehicle (£133,000) which has come in as a lower-level alternative to the Axial. (Who thinks of these names, we wonder?) It will certainly give the Marcopolo and even UVGs of this world a run for their money.

Minicoaches

On the other hand, while dimensions get bigger, there was also a very healthy selection of smaller coaches on view. At one time everything in this sector had clear origins in the van world; do you remember tiny versions of the Plaxton Supreme hanging precariously over the edges of Bedford CF chassis? Now there is no shortage of vehicles which, though based on van-derived chassis, are 'proper' coaches on a smaller scale. Plaxton's new Cheetah was as far removed from the mini Supreme as its Mercedes Vario chassis was from the prewar Leyland conjured up by the name of the new little Plaxton. Sizewise, indeed, it was no smaller than a Leyland Cheetah, able to offer up to 33 seats with a boot.

It's a brand new body, and is by no means a workover of the Beaver as a coach, with its stylish 'fast front' co-ordinated nicely into the Vario front end, stretched stainless steel side panels, as fitted on Plaxton's big coaches for the 1998 season, bonded glazing and an attractive interior which is just like a

Première on a slightly reduced scale.

Quite apart from short versions of full-size coaches, of which the most notable was a new 10.4m high-floor Bova, Optare had both its new Spanish-built Solara 35-seater, built on a Mercedes O.1120L front-engined chassis, and a new version of the Autobus Classique, the Nouvelle 2, while Caetano's evergreen Toyota-based Optimo is now available in a wider 26-seat form. And there was a new Japanese challenger for the market in the form of the LCB Marlin, a 26-seater shown by Leicester Carriage Builders on an Isuzu chassis, which rather reminded one of how the Optimo had started life.

Meanwhile there was more exotica still on the Iveco stand with two examples of the front-engined Euromidi with Indcar bodywork. One of these has been seen before, the 35-seat ECO.4 which looks rather like a scaled-down small coach, but the other was new, the Maxim, which loses six seats for the sake of totally over-the-top frontal styling which makes it look like a scaled-up American people carrier. Perhaps more likely to find wider favour was a more conservative 25-seater from Mellor on the 59.12 DailyCoach chassis. The Mellor Opus is to be available exclusively on the Iveco base for its first year, and we were slightly amused by the circular 'Push Once' bell pushes which looked quite out of place in its coach-style interior.

New coaches

There were plenty of new coaches there this time, and perhaps the most significant was the new Van Hool range. Though this shares the Alizée name of its predecessor, it has little in common with the old range.

Plaxton had a substantial stand showing its now very wide range, starting with the Beaver and Cheetah and now encompassing full-size coaches, low-floor buses from 9m to 12m and double-deck buses.

The newest entrant in its coach range was the Prima, shown on the Volvo B7R and described in more detail last month. The Prima is the new name for a lower-specified version of the Première 320, designed for day excursion and commuter work. It is now also available on DAF chassis, and one of these, in Green Line livery for The Shires, appeared outside. This emphasised both the commuter rôle of the Prima and also the fact that low-spec can include items such as air conditioning. It also served to emphasise how Cowie — sorry, Arriva — is heading towards DAF products.

There was also a Première, on a Dennis Javelin for Paul S. Winson, showing the usual flair of that operator with polished alloy wheels and over-the-top chrome-plated air horns on the roof, and, rather more sober, a Volvo B10M with Excalibur bodywork in Plaxton's metallic purple. Emphasising the fact that the Dennis Javelin is now 'up there with the big boys' (and there were plenty of them at the show, with bodywork by Plaxton, UVG, Neoplan,





Above:
Caetano launched its attractive-looking Enigma body on Volvo B10M chassis. It is also available on the Dennis Javelin. SM



Left:
Yet again Evobus showed a Setra S250 for Boons of Boreham in a striking livery. PL

Marcopolo and Berkhof) there was also a Javelin with Excaltur bodywork on the Dennis stand. New this year on Plaxton's coaches is Cromwell stainless steel for main side panels and luggage locker walls.

Dealer Alf Moseley Continental was there with a pair of Marcopolo-bodied Dennis Javelin coaches. There were questions over the fit and finish of early Marcopolo coach bodies in Britain, but those on show — for Peter Evans and Yorks — suggested that these problems have been overcome, and most acceptable they looked. Alf Moseley's next move is to bring in the Spanish Noge (pronounced something like 'No-jay') bodywork on MAN chassis. Alf Moseley Continental will also offer the Marcopolo body on MAN chassis, and has already sold two on 18.310 chassis. MAN coach chassis designations, incidentally, show gross vehicle weight followed by brake horsepower.

Further MAN rear-engined coach chassis there were the 13.220, a heavier-weight version of the 11.190 chassis which forms the basis of the Optare Vecta and has been reasonably popular as a midicoach, and the very hefty-looking 24.400 three-axle chassis, suitable for double-deck applications, was also on show.

Somewhat tucked away in a dark corner was the new Caetano Enigma, shown on a Volvo B10M chassis. The Enigma is a 3.5m high 12m 53-seater, very much in the contemporary vein with curves abounding and a front end which slopes downward in a similar style to the Irizar Century. Frontal styling is rather different however, with small round lights sweeping upwards to follow the lines of the body in a rather distinctive way. It is 30 years this year since Caetano first entered the British market. Then its products seemed rather brash and poorly finished; Caetano has moved a very long way in that 30 years. The Enigma, incidentally, will also be available on the Dennis Javelin.

Another well-established European coach builder on the British market is Jonckheere, and it was something of a surprise that there was only one of its vehicles there, a Monaco on the Volvo stand. On a B10M, this was very highly-specified coach for Durham City Coaches with a rather opulent tan leather interior.

To emphasise the Evobus connection Mercedes-Benz and Kässbohrer shared a stand. Not only does Mercedes look set to enter the big bus market in a bigger way, with its 100 Mercedes O.405Ns for Travel West Midlands it is also poised to introduce the O.404 coach to Britain for the first time with a Spanish-built Hispano Vita body, described elsewhere.

Meanwhile Kässbohrer had three Setras, including a lefthand drive S315GT and another S.250 for Boons of Boreham in a spectacular, pictorial livery, with a very comfortable interior complete with leather inserts on the seats. However decor-wise it gave the impression of a 1930s front parlour rather than a 1990s coach.

Citybuses

The low-floor bus arrived at Coach & Bus in 1993. Two years ago it became established. This year it was simply accepted that citybuses would be low-floor. Last time there was one vehicle in particular bucking the trend, the East Lancs-bodied Spartan. It was cheap, rugged and with a well-proven driveline. Two years on the customer for the show bus, Yorkshire Traction, has had another one and East Lancs doesn't seem to be in a hurry to build any more. With all its steps inside, it bucked the trend and it was a talking point.

This year's equivalent was on a less likely stand to give us a talking point for the wrong reasons, that of Neoplan, which was putting a toe in the water with a

low-floor citybus on a Hungarian Cspel chassis. It may have been cheap, but with a mountain of steps up to the rear end and headroom at the back seat which was a joke, it needs some attention before it becomes an acceptable UK citybus. We gather it was put together in a bit of a hurry for the show, and that these issues will be addressed prior to production.

Although it's still something of a newcomer a Wright Renown-bodied Volvo B10BLE for Greater Manchester, complete with the new FirstBus interior, now seemed somewhat mainstream. If that sounds negative, it's not supposed to be; it's simply a mark of how quickly such products have become established and the Renown is a good, competent bus. Also now seeming 'mainstream' were Volvo B6LEs shown by Volvo with Alexander ALX200 bodywork, a similarly-bodied vehicle for Hong Kong Citybus on Alexander's stand — a well-finished bus though with the rather intrusive air conditioning units which tend to cut down headroom on Hong Kong buses — and the last of 81 for Travel West Midlands on the Wright stand; last, that is, before another 70 were ordered.

Wright's Foline concept, pioneered on the Volvo B10BLE and using a ramped floor to cut down the height of the step into the rear saloon and to add extra strength within the wheelbase, has now been adapted for the new Scania L94, which made its debut as a Greater Glasgow vehicle; however the rear end of the Volvo is, we feel, rather more effective.

Optare of course stole a march with its very pretty and innovative Solo low-floor minibus, and also showed an Excel for Cardiff, while the other main contender for the low-floor big bus market is Plaxton, with the Prestige, its rebadged low-floor body originally shown by Northern Counties on a DAF chassis in 1995. In particular Plaxton seems to have improved on the interior, which was competent enough in its Northern Counties guise but just a bit clinical, though the interior of that shown by Hughes-DAF was difficult to judge, cluttered as it was with a very hefty luggage rack (which one commentator described as looking as if it had been built by a scaffolding contractor) for its rôle on Speedlink's connecting service between Heathrow Airport and the first stage of the new rail link from Paddington. That service is only to run for six or seven months, so maybe the luggage rack is intended to be dismantled easily and our friend might be right.

That on Plaxton's stand, sharing with other exhibits the unusual metallic purple phase through which Plaxton seems to be passing at the moment, had a much more friendly interior, with full-length lighting and, like at least one other manufacturer, borrowed the pink version of the DiPTAC hand poles pioneered by Trent.

Given its total domination of the market, there were not many Dennis Dart SLFs at the show, though Dennis had one with Plaxton Pointer 2 bodywork in Provincial livery. East Lancs showed a 10.6m Dart, for Dawson Rentals, though with East Lancs' extended front and rear ends of the Spryte body it came out at not much under 11m, and looked every inch of it; indeed it was not far behind the Plaxton/Dennis Dart SPD in size. East Lancs also showed one of the few non-low-floor buses there, a Dennis Arrow for Capital Citybus; though many were impressed by the air conditioning for the cab — which was working for the show — our passenger representative, Caroline Cahm, chairman of the National Federation of Bus Users, was less impressed by the legroom. Another East Lancs one was a new one for Road Car, for Skegness, which was outside, while UVG had one for Solent Blue Line.

Meanwhile Marshall also had a Dart SLF, with its Capital body, a 41-seater for evaluation by MTL in Southampton. This was shown alongside Marshall's own Minibus 2, the first of the revised model built initially for CentreWest, with what is now a rather basic interior for London work using the standard London Buses moquette. This showed how operators will need to keep abreast of fashions in interiors in the future; when introduced about five years ago the standard LBL moquette was bright and cheerful, but

COACH & BUS 97

now, with more subtle shades being used by the likes of FirstBus and Trent, it has had its day. The same interior, incidentally, was shown on a Northern Counties-bodied Volvo Olympian for London Central which, with utilitarian grey paint and rivets showing, represented little real improvement over the DMS, introduced 25 years earlier.

One of the problems encountered on the first Marshall Minibuses, which are powered by the Cummins four-cylinder B-series, was the amount of noise it kicked up, and Marshall seems to have done everything it can to tame it on the Mk 2 version. The engine has a quieter rotary fuel pump, the sump is sound insulated, there is a modified exhaust system, the engine air intake has been modified and there is a noise-dampened engine bulkhead. Other changes affect the cooling system, and there is a cooler too for the hydraulic fluid — the Minibus has air-over-hydraulic brakes — and the gearbox oil cooler has been improved. The suspension has also been modified and there are various minor modifications to the bodywork and heating system, not least the use of Multiplex for the electrics. The CentreWest vehicle was a 22-seater, with two tip-ups and space for a wheelchair.

It was certainly a show of optimism, with plenty of real interest and indeed with some genuine business being done there. However one cause for regret is the fact that our non-trade readers aren't able to visit; while this specifically bus and coach event is undoubtedly a better formula for the trade, at least in the old days of Commercial Motor Shows the general public had a chance to look too. After all, isn't carrying the public what it's all about at the end of the day?



A strong presence from Plaxton included the Prestige, the low-floor body introduced by Northern Counties two years ago on the DAF SB220. SM

MULTIPLEX FOR DUMMIES

One development at the show was the introduction of Multiplex for electrical systems. Optare has made great play of this on the new Solo, though we first encountered the concept on an experimental Leyland National about 15 years ago.

Marshall, like Optare, now uses multiplex electrical systems on the Minibus 2, as well as the Capital body shown on a Dart SLF, and in the case of the Minibus 2 this enabled various bodywork functions to be controlled in rather novel fashion from touch buttons on the steering wheel.

Marshall rather helpfully brings Multiplexing down to earth for those of us still at sea in this electronic age by describing it as a system which 'allows the transmission of multiple "bits" of information down a single wire. This can save significant amounts of wire and connections, lowering weight and improving reliability'.

In other words, instead of having a continuous piece of wire from the battery to say a lightbulb via a switch, the information transmitted down the single wire can tell the individual lightbulb to light up, saving miles of cable. You need a 'black box' to transmit the information; Marshall uses the Intellitec PMC system which has a central 'brain' which sets up 'time slots' and feeds signals to 16 remote units distributed around the bus, each of which can control up to 10 different items.



EXTRA

ILLION IN RDERS COACH AND BUS '97



BEAVER 2



POINTER 2



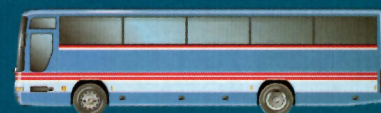
PRESTIGE



PALATINE 2



PREMIERE 320



PREMIERE 350



EXCALIBUR

Plaxton's products were widely acclaimed as the stars of Coach and Bus 97 - from the best selling Premiere to the brand new Cheetah. Quality, attention to detail and unrivalled value for money remain the cornerstones of Plaxton's business, a philosophy that has

secured orders from - among many others - Wallace Arnold, Shearings, City of Oxford, Flights, Dodsworth, Compass Royston and Classic.

To all our customers we extend our thanks for making Coach and Bus 97 our best show ever.

PLAXTON

THE DRIVING FORCE IN COACH & BUS

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News from the Show

Optare has now announced the first orders for its Solo low-floor minibus, described in fuller detail last month. Orders for 135 have been announced, worth £9million, 85 from Wilts & Dorset and 30 from Travel West Midlands.

Plaxton took orders worth just over £9.4 million at Coach & Bus '97. Altogether 27 operators placed orders for 56 full-size coaches, 11 of the new Cheetah on Mercedes-Benz Vario and 16 Beaver 2-bodied Vario minibuses, for Mainline. Orders included the first for the new Volvo B7R/Prima, from Gloucestershire-based James Bevan. The Show Cheetah was bought by Berkely of Paulton, while Logan of Dunloy, Northern Ireland, has ordered three Cheetahs.

Orders for new coaches for Bus Eireann were announced at the show; they include 10 Plaxton Premières, and, a new departure for the operator, 25 of the new Scania L94 with Irizar InterCentury bodywork.

Alexander received orders worth £50 million in the run-up to the show. In addition to the orders for 500 bodies for Stagecoach (see 'News') Cowie Group ordered nearly 200 vehicles (before its change of name to Arriva), including 50 of the new ALX400 double-deck body on DAF DB250 low-floor chassis.

Buses and coaches are getting wider. Vehicles taking advantage of the new 2.55m maximum width were Alexander's ALX300 on a Volvo B10BLE for Stagecoach Busways — one of 22 for that operator, Berkhof's new Radial coach, on a Dennis Javelin for The Londoners, and the new Plaxton President double-decker. Meanwhile Caetano is offering a wider version of its long-running Toyota-based Optimo, allow two-plus-two seating for up to 26.

Despite the optimism surrounding new low-floor double-deck designs manufacturers were less optimistic about the total market for double-deckers. Plaxton reckoned 550 a year was a 'safe bet', with most going to London.

Express coach operators were worried to see a Van Hool Astrobrel double-decker in Eddie Stobart colours. However the well-known haulier is not going into coaching; it is the team coach for Carlisle football club, which is sponsored by Eddie Stobart.

In addition to the 100 Mercedes-Benz O.405N low-floor buses, of which the first was shown at Coach & Bus, and the 30 Optare Solos mentioned above, Travel West Midlands has ordered 70 more Wright-bodied Volvo B6LEs and 20 low-floor Spectras.

MAN, which has a 15% of the European market, has had its first major breakthrough in the UK market with an order for 150 NL222 low-floor buses for Stagecoach. A new name for the UK is Noge, the Spanish coachbuilder, whose products will soon be offered by dealer Alf Mosley on MAN chassis, giving MAN another possible lead into the UK market.

Van Hool's new Alizée, part of the new T9 range launched in Europe two years ago, made its UK debut at Coach & Bus '97. The T9 range has now been voted European Coach of the Year. It includes some exotic integrals not available here, including a new version of the Astromega, available in 12m and 13.7m lengths, and other 13.7m coaches which would not be legal here.

Despite the arrival of the Dennis Trident and the Alexander ALX500 body for Hong Kong, Citybus has followed its order for 11 Tridents with one for 120 three-axle Volvo Olympians with Alexander R-type bodywork, with an option on another 40.

MARLIN

So far, while the Japanese have dominated other parts of the automotive industry, they have made little inroad in the European bus market, other than the popular Toyota/Caetano Optimo, the chassis of which is assembled by Caetano in Portugal.

A newcomer at the show was the Marlin, a small coach built by Leicester Carriage Builders, itself a company which is not very well-known, though it has built minibuses for Dublin Bus and also produced two bodies on Dennis Darts for East Sussex County Council.

Its latest offering is the Marlin, a 23-seater on an Isuzu NPR 6.2tonne chassis, which is 6.6m long and 2m wide, powered by a

3.85litre four-cylinder indirect-injection turbocharged diesel producing 120bhp and driving through a five-speed manual gearbox. It has leaf springs all round. The bodywork is quite tall and foursquare, with a plug-type door as standard, and appeared well-finished. It sells at £58,000. A larger 33-seater, the Marlin 2, based on a 7.5tonne Isuzu chassis, is to follow next April.

The new LCB Marlin on Isuzu NPR chassis.
SM



SUPER POINTER DART

Conceived as a compact vehicle for replacing minibuses the Dennis Dart has grown and grown like Topsy. The 9.8m 'conventional' Dart soon established itself as a low-cost replacement for hundreds of Leyland Nationals, a rôle the even larger low-floor SLF version has taken on in a big way. Now with a nominal length of 10.6m the longest Dart SLF is as big as a Leyland National, and in collaboration with Plaxton, on whose stand the latest version of the Dart appeared, it has now become unashamedly a full-size bus, 11.3m long and seating 41, albeit still slightly less than full width, at 2.4m, and on little wheels.

The Super Pointer Dart is a collaborative venture between Dennis and Plaxton, whereby Dennis supplies a chassis to Plaxton into which is built a 2" ramped framework for direct flooring, and other components normally supplied by the bodybuilder. The floor frame gives extra strength, necessitated by lengthening the vehicle to 11.3m, without a significant weight increase, and effectively creates an integral vehicle.

Full-size 12m low-floor single-deckers are unable to provide seating in the first three metres of the vehicle due to wheel arch intrusion. The Super Pointer Dart overcomes this problem by retaining the 19 1/2 inch wheels and low profile tyres of the 10.6m version, thus allowing up to 24 seats to be accommodated on the lower level, against a maximum of 18 in a standard 12m bus. The ramped floor means that only one single shallow step ahead of the rear axle is required, as opposed to two on the SLF.

Though in concept the vehicle is obviously very similar to other members of the Dart range, in execution it is quite different. While the front end is very much the same, the rear overhang is lengthened, while the main chassis frame itself is, surprisingly for what is still a lightweight bus, the same as that used on the 24tonne Trident, made up of box sections for strength. Given the extra size of the vehicle the 160bhp Cummins B-series engine is used, and to cope with the extra power and weight this now drives through Allison's World Series B300R transmission, necessitating the slight increase in the rear overhang given the increased dimensions of the World Series gearbox compared with the simpler, and remarkably compact, AT545 transmission used in standard Darts. The B300R, unlike the all-mechanical AT545, is electronically controlled and has a built-in retarder. It is actually a six-speed unit, though in this application it works as a four-speed, with first and sixth locked out. Top gear on the SPD is direct drive. The rear axle is now a 10.5tonne unit.

Externally the bus has the same styling as the standard Plaxton Pointer 2 body, and can be supplied with either double or single bonded glazing, optionally tinted green, or with square-cornered gasket glazing.

The standard interior specification is quite a high one, with a Sutrak heating and ventilation system which provides, Leyland National-style, a curtain of air down the body sides, cove panelling with built-in Invertec lighting and Scanflex individual seats. A typical accessible seating layout would accommodate 24 at low-floor level, out of a total of 41 passengers, with 23 standees. In the form shown the price has crept up to £97,000, still £10,000 less than a similarly-specified 12m single-decker, says Plaxton, and with a weight advantage of at least two tonnes. It has a 15-year design life.

Plaxton and Dennis believe the SPD to be suitable too for export markets, and took the SPD to the Kortrijk bus and coach show to expose it to the European market. The first UK order calls for six to be supplied to Cheshire Bus & Coach.

December 1997



The Plaxton/Dennis Dart SPD is no longer a midibus!
SM

BERKHOF

Two coaches were present on the Berkhof stand, the Axial, introduced last year, on a Volvo B10M chassis, and secondly, the Radial, a new low-height alternative, shown on a Dennis Javelin 245 chassis. This vehicle had been ordered by The Londoners for day-trip work, handling foreign tourists in the Capital.

The Radial is a 53-seater, built to a height of 3,300mm, and significantly to the new permissible width of 2,550mm. We found the gangway noticeably wider, and easier to negotiate carrying bulky hand luggage. Costing £133,000, this impressive coach compares favourably in price with others in its class, offering such optional extras as toilet, TV-video etc, while another £10,000 buys air conditioning, increasingly a requirement on coaches these days. The Axial will be available from stock on the Javelin, and to

order on a Volvo B10M. An Axial-bodied Javelin GX, with 300bhp Cummins C-series engine, is priced at £141,000.

Styling of the Radial is more muted than the Axial, with straight lines rather than curves, and some resemblance to the Excellence 1000 which it replaces. Although a low-cost vehicle on the Javelin, it certainly does not come across as a 'cheap' vehicle and it will doubtless be a keen contender in its sector of the market, especially given the advantage of those extra 5cm across the beam.

The new Berkhof Radial on Dennis Javelin for The Londoners. Though lower cost than its Axial stablemate it benefits from the new 2.55m width, to good effect on the interior.
BERKHOF



VOLVO/PLAXTON PRESIDENT – A CONCEPT BUS?

The new Plaxton President low-floor double-deck bus was, justifiably, the talk of Coach & Bus '97 — as was Volvo's refusal to talk about the chassis. STEPHEN MORRIS took a close interest in it at the show and thinks he might have worked it all out . . . but then again . . .

Coach & Bus '97 was quite remarkable for the number of vehicles being seen for the first time, and as a result it was difficult to pick out an individual star for the show. Optare's stylish and innovative new Solo low-floor minibus was certainly a keen contender, for its imaginative layout and almost cheeky styling. Less immediately obvious was the low-floor Spectra; we've seen Spectras before, but it looks as if the latest version has won the race to be Britain's first new-generation low-floor

The impressive new Plaxton President low-floor double-decker on a 'mystery' Volvo chassis.

PICTURES BY THE AUTHOR

double-decker. Alexander's ALX300 had to be a contender as the first production 2.55m-wide bus there — and what an incredible difference those measly 5cm make to the overall effect of the bus. Decent width seats and a decent-width gangway can at last be fitted without compromise. And the biggest Dart yet, the 11.3m SPD, looks set to be sure-fire success and will probably outsell anything else there.

But for this writer, and no doubt many other visitors to Coach & Bus '97, the star had to be the Volvo/Plaxton President, the first British-market double-deck bus badged 'Plaxton'. External styling was perhaps a tad understated, but was pleasing, crisp and modern. One could imagine East Lancs' designers looking at it and saying 'that's what we meant when we designed the Cityzen'. It has all the style implied by the Cityzen, but somehow executed with just that little extra finesse we expect of Plaxton. It's highly competent and probably won't date overnight.

A London concept bus?

Internally, it was based fairly and squarely on the drawings put out by London Transport for a new concept bus for the low-floor era. The entrance was wide and spacious, with a 1,400mm doorway set off by a deep, one-piece windscreen. The whole impression was one of space, and no doubt operators will consider it totally extravagant and try to fit seats everywhere and take away from the spacious concept. Plastic mouldings swept round from the cab, in a bluey-green shade which ought to have looked awful but didn't; it worked. This

seemed to entice you on into the saloon, which opened out aft of the wheelarches with a group of four facing seats under the staircase and four side-facing tip-ups opposite, creating a wheelchair space ahead of the centre door, which had a wheelchair ramp according to LT's specification.

The staircase, on the offside, was completely straight, in the style of Birmingham Corporation in the 1950s, with a glass panel in the side to add to the sense of light and space. Aft of the centre door was a small step up and a slightly ramped gangway into a largely conventional rear saloon, except for the fact that the engine was in one corner and there were seats right to the back, with a nice deep rear window behind in the half of the rear end not occupied by engine. Half bulkheads were stylish and finished with glass, while handrails swept gracefully upwards in an arc spreading out towards the outer edges of the vehicle, giving extra shoulder space and also adding to the overall style.

A similar theme continued upstairs, and the only problem here was that headroom was on the tight side, contrasting with the very lofty space downstairs. This is because Plaxton has decided to minimise the number of differences between the full-height and low-height versions of the bus; the upper deck is to be identical on both with 6in taken out of the lower-deck headroom to accommodate lower versions of the bus. However the lack of upper-deck headroom was rather at odds with the spaciousness of the rest of the bus.

The President is another bus which has taken advantage of the quiet relaxation of bus widths



from 2.5m to 2.55m to excellent effect; with the exception of the upper deck headroom the whole emphasis is on creating as much space as possible. The only other gripe we had was that it seemed very easy to bang your head on the staircase when alighting from the group of four seats under it, while the handrail on the staircase didn't quite work and Plaxton has promised to alter it.

The President was certainly the talking point of the show, though not all were as excited by it as the editor. Caroline Cahm, chairman of the National Federation of Bus Users and tireless champion of the bus passenger, took an instant dislike to it and felt the moulding round the front and through the front wheelarches gave the whole thing a tunnel-like aspect. Nonetheless, after her initial impressions she was particularly complimentary about the spacious staircase design and the design of the rear half of the lower saloon. At least it stimulated debate and immediately made every other double-decker bus — even the trend-setting Spectra — look dated.

What's it based on?

The President was also a talking point in that it was quite clearly based on a brand new Volvo chassis and Volvo was giving away precisely nothing. Indeed it was a slightly odd start to the

British-built low-floor double-decker; while Dennis was happy to tell everyone exactly what its new UK two-axle Trident would be like, it hadn't actually finished building one. On the other hand Volvo had a complete bus there and wouldn't say a bean about it, other than 'It is a concept chassis'. Engine covers all carried conspicuous notices saying they were locked.

Thus equipped with magnifying glass, deerstalker and curly pipe, and flagrantly disregarding the instructions of a Volvo spokesperson not even to speculate what it might be, we'll try and piece it together.

The front end seems to be pure Volvo B10L, with its Titan-derived independent suspension. Indeed Volvo has already gone on record saying that all its low-floor buses will have independent front suspension, even if there is as yet no sign of its appearing on the Volvo B6LE. We understand it will in due course. A large fuel filler above the front wheelarch, and the large luggage area around the wheelarch inside, gives away the location of the fuel tank in front of the offside wheelarch.

Plaxton we gather built an underframe within the wheelbase, though we understand East Lancs will build on a full-length chassis, so there would seem to be a choice of 'short' chassis for dividing by the bodybuilder and a fully-built chassis. Overall length of the President is 10.5m.

The most obvious new departure is that the engine is in-line in the rear nearside corner, and having had a sneaky peek underneath, it is

definitely a vertical unit, with, it would appear, the radiator mounted on top, between the decks in Titan/Bristol VRT3 fashion. Gear controls in the cab were marked 'Voith'; it would seem highly reasonable to expect Volvo to offer a choice of Voith or ZF automatic transmission and we understand the show bus did indeed have a Voith gearbox, and the control panel wasn't just there to put us off the scent! The rear axle had typical Volvo hubs, and was clearly, from the design of the gangway, a drop-centre unit, no doubt with the diff offset to the nearside to suit the driveline.

The space for the engine appeared insufficient for the 9.6litre TD100 series. With increasingly tough emissions restrictions there is a general move towards smaller, more efficient engines giving higher power outputs from smaller swept volumes, and this would also help weight distribution with an engine in line in the corner of the rear overhang. It was proved more than 20 years ago that the 6.7litre TD70 engine is man enough to power a double-decker, and the successor to that engine, the all-mechanical D7B, is offered in Volvo's other debutante at the show, the B7R coach. That's what our money would be on, for what it's worth. So it would seem the secrecy would surround a cross between a Bristol VRL and an Ailsa, with a bit of Titan thrown in . . . Well, they say a bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing and that's the sort of conclusion one comes to in the absence of any hard facts.

We could speculate further. The fact that the engine nestles in the nearside corner could suggest that Volvo also has in mind a new low-floor chassis for the Continental market, one which would allow a step-free gangway throughout, even with a third doorway behind the rear wheels. After all, the Volvo B10L can't manage that and a side engine is in many ways the most effective solution to the production of a low-floor bus without resorting to totally new drivelines. Is that why Volvo is being so secretive? Has the need for a low-floor double-decker led it to build on a forthcoming new citybus chassis for the whole of Europe, which is not yet ready for launching?

The President is shortly to enter service on a trial basis in London, and maybe by then we shall have more hard facts on Volvo's end of it. It will also give the opportunity to see how all those features which look so nice at a show actually work out in practice. Meanwhile we understand the body will also be available on the DAF DB250 and Dennis Trident. Though badged 'Plaxton' the new body is built, like all the group's double-deckers, at the Northern Counties factory in Wigan and both companies are to be congratulated on a truly modern vehicle which has the capability to move the humble double-deck bus into a new era.

Let's hope the responses to this concept lead to yet further improvement and not a watering down of it.



Above left:

The spacious lower deck of the 2.55m-wide President. Headroom was exceptional. Note too the unusual handpoles; these are also used in the Dart SPD.

Above right:

The rear end of the President, with its offset window, reminiscent of a Titan. The engine is vertically mounted, in line in the nearside rear corner.

Left:

Wheelchair entry in London is through the centre door, which thus has to be step-free. Greatly praised was the straight staircase with glass side panel — though it loses a few seats.

COACH & BUS 97

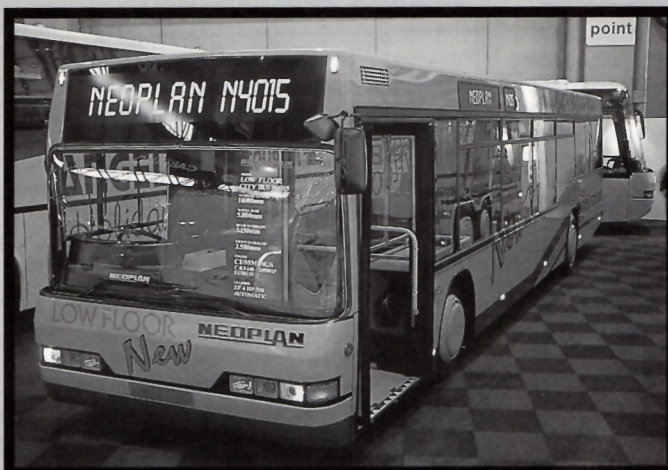
NEOPLAN UK

This is the new trading name for SJ Carlton, the sole importer of Neoplan vehicles to the UK. On its stand, we encountered the Neoplan N4015, a heavy duty low-floor bus, priced at less than £100,000.

Built on a Cspel 844 underframe manufactured in Hungary, this unusual vehicle is powered by a Cummins 8.2 litre C-series engine, driving through the familiar ZF HP590 automatic transmission with built-in retarder. Axles are by Raba, a Hungarian manufacturer, with a world-wide reputation.

Whilst we would agree with the importer's statement that 60% of the length is low-floor, the rest of the vehicle has no fewer than five steps, rising ultimately to a back seat, where passengers are perched truly in the 'gods', high above those in the front stalls, with minimal headroom, and a feeling of vulnerability. The back seat had all the convenience of a traditional low-bridge double-decker, without even the benefit of a sunken side gangway. The low-floor section has overhead poles, complete with an abundance of hanging straps, the whole, easily converted to an adventure playground by those travelling on the 16.00 home from school!

Neoplan UK says that resiting the air tanks, currently over the engine, coupled with one or two other minor adjustments will produce a more acceptable interior. We did however, like the small but bright lights set into the step risers to increase safety awareness — a simple, but thoughtful touch.



Above:
The exterior of the Neoplan N4015 is not unattractive.
SM

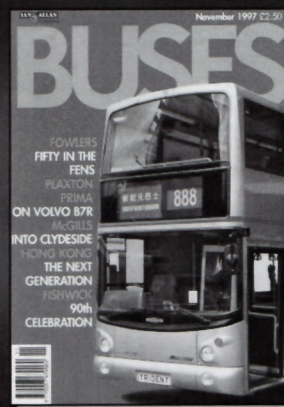
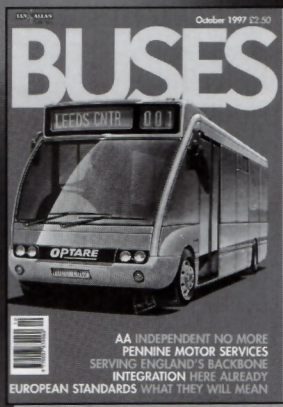
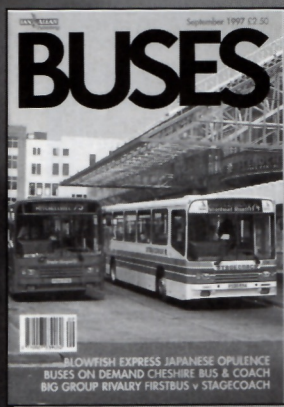
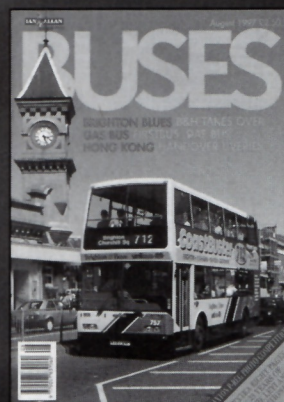
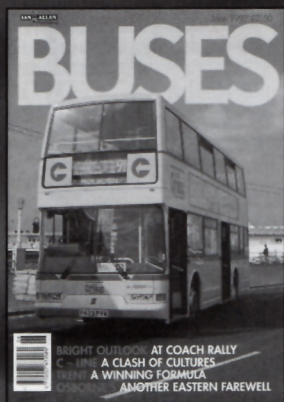


Left
Ideal for mountaineers! the long hard climb to the back seat described in the text. Note the riser lights. The low floor area is greater than on some better known vehicles in this class.
SM

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BUSES

Amongst the stars of the show were two new low-floor products from Optare. One was the Solo, the rear-engined integral minibus which we described last month. With a step-free entrance of only 250mm before kneeling and an uncluttered interior it is possibly one of the most accessible buses around, and will certainly be a natural choice for replacing MetroRiders with something more accessible, assuming operators are prepared to move from the substantial Cummins B-series six-cylinder engine to the 4.25litre four-cylinder 12valve Mercedes — as fitted to the Vario — that is offered in the Solo. One has already nailed its colours to the mast, Wilts & Dorset, which has added to its impressive Optare portfolio with an order for 85. The Solo is all-steel, and uses Multiplex wiring, while the driveline, like the Excel, is mounted in an easily demountable cradle, such that a large operator could have a complete spare driveline to allow a failed vehicle to be turned round remarkably quickly.

Travel West Midlands was also waiting for a low-floor minibus before committing itself to ordering, and has gone for 30 Solos. But the first new Optare for that operator was also on display, the first low-floor version of the Spectra. Again it is indicative of how far bus design has moved on that the low-floor Spectra did not come over as the exciting vehicle it should have been, given that it was the first low-floor double-decker for Britain, and also given the impact that the Spectra made when it was launched.

Externally there is very little to distinguish the low-floor Spectra from the previous low-

height version. The execution of the front part of the lower saloon is tidy, while the rear-end is little changed from the previous Spectra — and indeed the DAF chassis, with its Metrobus-derived rear suspension and driveline layout, is also very little changed at the rear. Where Plaxton has used the low floor to create lots of headroom downstairs, Optare has kept the standard headroom of the lowheight version of the Spectra both upstairs — a little disappointing here, given the superb headroom on the top deck of a full-height Spectra — and at the back downstairs. There is a step up in the

gangway part way along downstairs, and while headroom throughout naturally meets legal minimum requirements, while the front half is fine for most passengers, the rear half offers less headroom than many passengers might need, and there is considerable danger of banging one's head on the ceiling when climbing the step, which could prove embarrassing in service.

Optare's other new products there were the Spanish-built Solera 35-seat coach on a front-engined Mercedes O.1120L chassis and a restyled Autobus Classique Nouvelle, the Nouvelle 2.



The new low-floor Optare Spectra for Travel West Midlands. PL

SCANIA'S NEW 4 SERIES

Now that the improvements Scania has introduced in its truck range have worked through to the bus and coach world, we shall have to get used to a whole new list of Scania chassis designations for its new 4-series range.

At the heart of the 4-series are two new engines, which replace the existing nine-litre and 11-litre. First is the DSC9.15 engine, a new nine-litre unit available in 220, 260 and 310bhp versions. Whilst this is a replacement for the earlier nine-litre unit which was used in chassis like the K93, it also replaces the 11-litre in some applications, not least the L113, which has enjoyed some popularity in Britain latterly, not least as the basis of the Wright Access-ultralow. Thus the new model, with the engine in line at the rear but inclined to 60° to reduce floor height at the rear is now the L94, which is also used as the basis of a coach in a way the L113 never was. It also reflects the growing trend towards smaller engines for bus work.

The other engine for coach applications is a new 12-litre four-valves-per-cylinder unit, one of the few new-generation large diesels to meet Euro 2 emissions levels without recourse to electronic control. It will also meet Euro 3, but will need electronics to achieve this.

Perhaps surprisingly, given the need for three axles under other 12-litre rear-engined coaches to meet UK axle loadings, the new K-series 12-litre chassis, the K124IB which has the engine in line and mounted vertically at the rear, is available on two axles, as shown by the Van Hool-bodied vehicle for Harry Shaw. An interesting feature of the K124 is that the front module of the chassis is designed to be

shortened by bodybuilders if needed by up to 200mm in increments of 40mm. The Harry Shaw coach featured a 48-seat version of the new Alizée and has a 360bhp engine and seven-speed Scania synchromesh gearbox with Comfort Shift computer-aided gearshift. Scania has not sold a coach with a conventional gear lever in Britain for more than three years.

The L94IB has already been seen under the low-height (3.2m) Irizar InterCentury body and was shown in this form with 55 seats, air conditioning and double glazing; low-spec coaches are quite high spec these days! Other L94s were a Van Hool Alizée in National Express trim for Dorset Travel Services and, making its debut, a low-floor L94UB version with Wrights Access Fline body, which will replace the L113/Access-ultralow. This uses the same ramped floor as the Renown on Volvo B10BLE (one day Wrights will take a leaf out of Cowie's book and rationalise its product names, if only to help bus magazines get them right!), and uses the extra strength built in with the ramped floor structure to eliminate the need for bonded glazing. However the first one is for Greater Glasgow in FirstBus trim, which specifies bonded double glazing as part of its current spec. Scania and Wrights are currently building 190 low-floor buses for FirstBus, out of which this is the 44th, though there are still more Access-ultralows to come before the order switches to the L94/Access Fline. The bus version has the 220bhp version of the DSC9-11 engine with a ZF 4HP500 gearbox and, like all 4-series, air suspension with electronic levelling control.

However the 3-series still lives on, and there was a three-axle K113TRB with Irizar Century body for Barnards of Kirton Lindsay (weighing in a hefty 14,870kg with air conditioning, double glazing, power-operated locker doors etc) and a more modest N113DRB double-decker with East Lancs Cityzen body, shown outside for Maynes, a long-wheelbase model using the extra length to give greater legroom.



Scania's new L94 with Wright's Access Fline body was launched at the show. In Greater Glasgow livery, it is one of 190 Wright-bodied Scania L113s and L94s currently in build for FirstBus. SM

MERCEDES - BENZ

We reported in the October issue that Travel West Midlands had placed an order for 100 Mercedes-Benz O.405Ns, to be finished in the UK by UVG. At that time little information was available, so we were pleased to have the opportunity to inspect the low-floor bus, and to ascertain some further details.

The vehicle on display, although in Travel West Midlands' colours, was in fact, a demonstrator. By the time this appears in print, the first units should have arrived at UVG, where floor covering, interior panels, cab fittings, lighting, seats etc will be fitted to conform to UK standards, and exterior paint finish applied. First deliveries are scheduled for early next year; this is expected to be at a rate of five per week, when production is fully underway.

The vehicle is powered by Mercedes' OM447HLA engine, rated at 213bhp. Because of the volumes built by Mercedes, Europe's largest bus builder, it is able to produce a purpose-built horizontal bus engine in this sector, rather than rely on truck-based units. Thus the specification of the engine is one which will appeal to traditional engineers in the industry, a big, 12-litre slow-revving unit with a low power rating, meaning everything is understressed, giving long life and good fuel consumption. FirstBus, which runs substantial quantities of Optare Prismas,

using the same engine, reports excellent fuel consumption and is also impressed by the unit's low-speed torque delivery and flat torque curve, ideal for stop-start conditions. Indeed the engine was the only one in its size to meet Euro 1 without turbocharging, though turbocharging and intercooling were needed to meet Euro 2 — notably with no power increase. In the low-floor O.405N the engine is offset to the nearside.

Standard transmission is a ZF 4HP500 automatic, with two-stage integral retarder. A Voith three-speed D863.3.3 with integral retarder is available as an option. The drive-train is mounted offset at the rear in a T-



Above:
The Mercedes-Benz O.405N, finished by UVG.
PL

Top right:
Step heights on the Mercedes-Benz Vario are improved over the previous model; this is a Beaver 2 for Trent.
SM

Above right:
Also new from Mercedes is the O.404 coach with Hispano Vita bodywork; this one was shown outside the NEC.
PL

Right:
The interior of the O.405N is neatly laid out, with a step-free gangway. Though in Travel West Midlands livery, the show vehicle did not feature that operator's interior.
SM

drive configuration, and a top speed of 55 mph is expected. Full air suspension is accompanied by a kneeling facility.

Mercedes claims that, being of integral construction, the vehicle has, due to single step entry, and a stepless gangway throughout, unparalleled access and ease of passenger movement. Our impression was that the gently ramped floor, with seats on footstools rising in steps over the rear wheels, and continuing to rise until the rear of the bus was reached, presented a tidy appearance and did improve accessibility to a degree. The 'gallery effect' has been eliminated and the layout will certainly encourage more passengers to use the rear seats. The front of the saloon has wheelchair and buggy space, facilitated by the now familiar tip-up seats. Mercedes is hoping to sell more, and states that the model will remain in production as long as a demand exists.

Also on display was the Mercedes-Benz Vario minibus, which has now ousted the familiar T2 range (709, 811, 814 etc) and is appearing in larger quantities throughout Britain. The Vario is a complete van range, but the bus versions are purpose-built with a lower frame height to give an improved entrance over previous models, in line with the 1997 DiPTAC requirements. Typically it gives a three step entrance with a 250mm first step and two 200mm steps, better than the previous generation of minibuses though still a long way from the step-free entrances becoming commonplace in other sectors. At first the Vario was available in 0.810 and 0.814 models, but both are now marketed as 0.814s, a 7.5tonne chassis with a choice of 4.2m or 4.8m wheelbases for overall lengths of 7m, 7.8m and 8.5m. A conventional beam axle is used at the front, with air-over-hydraulic disc brakes and air suspension all round (though coach versions tend to have rear air suspension only) and overall width is around 2.3m.

The engine is a new Euro 2 unit, the OM904LA four-cylinder direct injection turbocharged and intercooled diesel with three valves per cylinder and electronic control giving 136bhp at only 2,300rpm and driving through either a ZF five-speed synchromesh gearbox or the Allison AT542 automatic. Both those shown at Coach & Bus, for County Bus and Trent, had Plaxton Beaver 2 bodywork. With the Beaver 2 the smallest Vario can seat 23 at DiPTAC spacing, rising to 31 on the longest version, in all case with a luggage pen. Another two seats can be squeezed in if DiPTAC is overlooked.

While Mercedes threatens to hit the big time in Britain with the 0.405N, it is also making a new attempt on the British coach market with the 0.404 coach, not to be offered here in the impressive — and expensive — integral form, but bodied in Spain by Hispano with its crisply-styled Vita. The Vita comes in two trim levels, as a standard 53-seater or more luxurious 49-seater, and is a high-floor coach, attractively-styled using the the standard Mercedes front end and with a clean, uncluttered appearance. No doubt the body represents a major saving in cost over the complete integral Mercedes, and it is noteworthy that MAN, Iveco and Scania are also coming into the British market with Spanish bodywork.

The Mercedes is powered by an OM441LA V6 10,964cc 340bhp engine using Mercedes' own six-speed manual gearbox. It has a rather complex independent front suspension and disc brakes all round.

VAN HOOL

Change and decay in all around I see' might be one way of describing the coach industry over the last 15 years, as fashions and indeed builders have come and gone. The early-1980s in particular provided all sorts of futuristic designs (remember the Ayats Apollo or the Van Rooijen Odyssey?) and new models galore.

However one abiding feature has been the Van Hool Alizée, which itself followed on the Aragon model in the British market with very little change in style. Over a period of 18 years the Alizée has been subtly modified, but with private plates it takes a trained eye to distinguish say a 1982 Alizée from a 1997 Alizée — yet no-one could accuse today's model of looking dated. While it may be understated, the Van Hool Alizée is a timeless classic.

But all good things come to an end, and in 1995 Van Hool announced a replacement in Europe of its T8 range with the new T9, and now the Alizée version of that has been announced here at Coach & Bus '97. It is derived from the 3.47m-high T915 Alicron integral but built as a body-on-chassis, and otherwise slightly modified to meet the requirements of the British and Irish markets.

Where most coach builders are going for swoops and curves the Alizée sticks to a squarer look, though with subtle rounding off and a downward curving sweep at the front end of the window line. Alongside many of the vehicles there the new Alizée looked slightly unexciting, though a concession to modernity was the use of big fashionable 'lop-eared' mirrors.

Yet, like a well-maintained 15-year-old Alizée in 1997, a 'new' Alizée will probably look far less dated in another 15 years' time than many other, more progressive, body styles which were on show at Birmingham. It will probably be worth a lot more on the secondhand market, too.

Various levels of trim are available, as was evident from the show exhibits, Volvo B10Ms for Kenzies, Telling Golden Miller and Whitelaw of

Stonehouse, a DAF SB3000 for Fishwick and a Scania L94 for The King's Ferry. Unlike most manufacturers these days Van Hool still makes its own seats and very comfortable they are too, even if the extension of rather swirly moquette on the King's Ferry vehicle to the luggage rack doors (which are an option) didn't do the interior too many favours. Scania also showed two new Alizées, one for Dorset Travel Services in National Express Rapide specification on an L94 and a K124 for Harry Shaw, while Hughes-DAF had a luxurious 32-seat DAF SB3000 for Eavesway.

Though the Alizée shares the name of the old model, the T9 version is all new and is slightly higher than the T8, and although Van Hool builds vehicles beyond the usual European 12m limit for rigid vehicles which some member states have chosen to stretch a bit, it is only engineered for 2.5m width as the 2.55m coach is not yet universally permitted in Europe. So much for harmonisation, where Holland will let you stick another two and a half metres on the end and France won't let you have 5cm more on the width! The new structure means that two rather than three cross members are used on rear-engined models, reducing intrusion into the luggage compartment.

Van Hool has continued to build the former LAG Eos range separately from its T9s, and the first three-axle Eos for the UK, for Hallmark, was also shown, though righthand drive three-axle Eoses, or Eii, or whatever maybe the plural of Eos, have been built for Ireland. There was also a two-axle Eos 90 for Hallmark, which is currently take six. Both had MAN engines, a 310bhp unit for the two-axle coach and a 400bhp one for the three-axle, which had reclining seats for just 28.

What did look dated was the Astrobel on Volvo B12T chassis in Eddie Stobart livery. It's a strange thing; the Astrobel is still an acceptable design, and Eddie Stobart's livery looks superb on its trucks. Yet the one just didn't suit the other; the livery made the coach look old-fashioned, and vice versa. It was incidentally a very luxuriously-finished 36-seater, with 10 seats downstairs and 26 up.



The new Van Hool Alizée on a Scania L94 for The King's Ferry and DAF SB3000 for Fishwicks. SM



The Astrobel on Volvo B12T in Eddie Stobart livery was a talking point; however we understand Eddie Stobart is not about to take on National Express! PL

COACH & BUS 97

MAN - A BRIGHT FUTURE?

Several interesting developments were either in evidence or in the pipeline at MAN. On display was an example of the full-size (11.7m) low-floor NL222 chassis, bodied in only eight weeks by East Lancs. The interior of this vehicle was well-laid out, and was attracting a lot of interest. Though corresponding in dimensions to East Lancs' Flyte body, the Show vehicle, finished in Nottingham's colours (it is not necessarily intended for that fleet), is badged as a Spryte, which East Lancs intends to use for all its low-floor single-deckers regardless of size. It was a 43-seater, with 20 seats on the lower level. One feature which did catch our attention was the fact that the driving position is also very low, which may not go down too well with drivers.

MAN was in particularly bullish form, following the latest Stagecoach order which calls for 150 NL222s. These are to be fitted with 2.55m wide Alexander ALX 300 bodies and represent the major breakthrough for which MAN has been striving for many years in the UK market. To date bus chassis sales in this country have been in small numbers, mainly as the basis of the very competent Optare Vecta, although MAN occupies 15% of the market in mainland Europe. Stagecoach has already bought MANs for its operations in New Zealand and was particularly impressed with the after-sales package offered.

As stated, the NL222 is a low-floor chassis, equipped with MAN's rather small D0826 LUH 12 6.9litre six-cylinder horizontal engine, offset to the nearside of the chassis at the rear and rated at 220bhp. It drives through a choice of automatic transmissions, all with integrated retarder, from Voith, Renk or ZF, into a hub-reduction rear axle with offset diff. Full air suspension allows kneeling to the nearside, and there is a beam axle at the front.

The MAN NL 222 full-size low-floor single-decker as bodied by East Lancs. First production examples for the UK for Stagecoach will be bodied by Alexander. SM



New from Alf Moseley in November will be two Noge-bodied MANs. Known as the Catalan, it will be available on the 18.310 at 3.4m high, or on the three-axle 24.400 at 3.7m. The left-hand drive coach at the show did not conform to UK regulations, being 3.7m high on the two-axle 18.310, which puts too much weight on the rear axle for Britain. SM



Displayed as a chassis only was the MAN 13.220. This is the latest version of the chassis which forms the basis of the Optare Vecta, as the 11.190 and has also been bodied by Marshall for MTL London. The 13.220 has a vertical D0826LOH 15 engine rated at 220hp and the show chassis was fitted with the standard six-speed ZF S6-36 manual gearbox used in coach applications. The ZF 4HP500 automatic is available at extra charge. Air suspension allows raising and lowering, or kneeling as an option. We understand that a low-floor version of this midi, with horizontal engine, will soon be available.

We were also given details of a three-axle chassis, to be made available in this country. Designated 24.400, it has a rear mounted 400hp engine and ZF 8S180 eight-speed manual gearbox. It is said to be suitable as the basis for a high-capacity, medium range, inter-city express coach, with interest having already been shown by one major operator.

Another interesting development is the appointment of Alf Moseley Continental as MAN's main coach and bus distributor for the UK coach market. As a consequence, MAN 18.310 coach chassis are to be delivered to Spanish coachbuilders Noge, and to Marcopolo in Portugal for bodying for the UK market; indeed two Marcopolo-bodied MANs have already been delivered to British operators. Noge will also body the 13.220 as the basis of a smaller coach for Britain and the 24.400 three-axle with its 3.7m-high body which is too heavy for two axles in Britain. A Spanish-registered 3.7m high coach was on display, in left-hand drive two-axle form. Alf Moseley is due to launch the Noge body under the Catalan name during November.

ALEXANDER ALX 300

Alexander's ALX family is now almost fully grown. Early this year, the first examples of the ALX200, midibus body appeared. These have been followed into service this summer by the ALX100 on Mercedes Vario chassis. The ALX500 has now made its debut on three-axle Dennis Tridents for Hong Kong, whilst the version destined for the home market two-axle Dennis Trident and other low-floor double-deck chassis, the ALX400, has put in an appearance in an artist's impression and has been ordered by Arriva, née Cowie, for the DAF DB250 chassis.

This left us with the ALX 300, for full-size single-deckers as yet unseen. All ALX-series bodies, with the exception of the ALX100, are low-floor, and have a strong family resemblance, particularly in respect of the front end treatment.

The first ALX300 appeared at the show. Built on a Volvo B10BLE chassis, it was part of an order for 22 destined for Stagecoach Busways, and was noteworthy also in so far as it was built to the new maximum width of 2.55m. This gave a spacious feel to the interior — the extra width of the gangway bringing more benefits to the low-floor concept. Completed to the Stagecoach standard, using red, grey and orange, the bus had an extremely bright feel to it too. Stagecoach has ordered 150 more, all on MAN chassis.



The standard Stagecoach interior of the ALX300 body complements the extra width in the gangway to striking effect. SM

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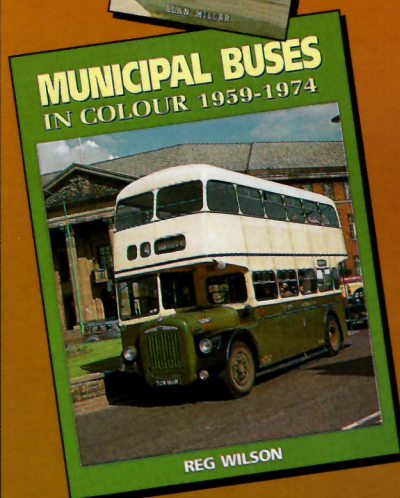
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LYDNEY ROAD

& RAIL SHOW

STEPHEN MORRIS headed to Gloucestershire to an atmospheric autumnal event

Above:

New to the rally circuit this year is this Burlingham-bodied Leyland Leopard L1 of Hills of Tredegar. It was one of the first Leopards built.

Below:

Burlingham-bodied single-deckers abounded at Norchard, coincidentally, including this AEC Reliance of Safeway, South Petherton, which looked in especially good order.

Bottom:

Two Bristol L5Gs which live in the Cotswold area are Western National 333 (DOD 518) and Southern National 262 (ETT 956). Both are prewar buses, both rebodied after the war. 333 still looks prewar, with its high radiator and 1950 Beadle body, though 262 — actually the older of the two — has a 1955 ECW body and lower radiator and looks a pure postwar bus.

There are a few occasions during the rally season when it's possible to combine interests in a number of modes of transport, and possibly one of the most diverse is that run by the Dean Forest Railway at its station at Norchard.

The bus rally has been going for a number of years now, bringing useful revenue to the railway in its quest to extend up the valley from the town of Lydney, on the north bank of the River Severn. It's a picturesque line, steeped in industrial history, as its primary purpose never was the carriage of passengers — something which ceased on a regular basis as long ago as 1929 — but to serve local coal mines, quarries etc. Indeed the present Norchard station is on the site of a former colliery.

The rally itself attracts a huge range of vehicles; in addition to buses there are cars, commercial vehicles, a few military vehicles and other items such as fairground organs, while the railway itself is in steam. This year's event was on 19 October, and with the steam hanging in the air of a crisp autumn day, with the sights and sounds of the various exhibits it was quite an evocative affair.

There was also the chance to ride on buses, primarily on a car park service to Lydney, and the one trip we managed on it was on an ex-Warrington Leyland Panther Cub. The Panther Cub has recently been branded a 'Blunderbus' in our sister magazine *Classic Bus*, and while they may have been difficult to operate effectively, they were certainly no blunder for the passenger. The East Lancs-bodied bus really brought home just what a sophisticated little bus the Panther Cub was, with an excellent ride quality and smooth, quiet performance — and it seemed to take the local hills in its stride too.

There were more than 40 buses there, many of them fairly local to this Anglo-Welsh border country, though overall winner, from Doncaster, was Tony Peart's well-known York Pullman AEC Regent, which often carries off awards from this event.



WYTHALL MILESTONES

The first weekend in November turned out to be quite a busy one for those with more than a passing interest in road transport in the West Midlands. PHILIP LAMB reports on the happenings at Wythall on 2 November. PICTURES BY THE AUTHOR

Having witnessing the end of Daimler (Leyland) Fleetline operation in Birmingham on the Saturday, (more of which in next month's issue), we repaired to Wythall the next day for BAMMOT's Pre-hibernation and Old Birmingham Day, where three strands pulled together to create the Birmingham flavour to the event.

Diamond Jubilee for a Daimler

It is now 60 years since the well-known veteran, Birmingham 1107, took to the road. Now in preservation for considerably longer than she was in service, the Daimler COG5 entered service in November 1937, and is now a Wythall resident, in the care of the 1685 Group. 1107 (CVP 207) is a member of the large batch of Metro-Cammell-bodied Daimler COG5s to enter service in the years leading up to the War. They were numbered in the series 969 to 1236, with the exception of 1034 to 1038, which were similar-bodied AEC Regents.

1107 was one of a number of COG5s converted for use as a snowplough! She was returned to service by 1958, but the April 1961 issue of *Buses Illustrated* includes 1107 in a list of vehicles 'stored', pending sale. The front cover of the October 1961 issue of the magazine features sister vehicle 1039 at the famous Bird's scrapyards in Stratford upon Avon, most of the 'survivors', having, by then, been despatched there, either for resale or for scrap. 1039's fate was to be the latter. 1107, however, was more fortunate, and was in 1964 sold for preservation.

1107 undertook a couple of trips into the surrounding area during the day, including the last, a twilight run to Kings Heath. Billed as an 'atmospheric' experience, 1107 was aided by the elements to produce a truly memorable ride. The gathering gloom of the afternoon had finally metamorphosed into a misty drizzle when, at 16.30, 1107 with a good load, pulled out of the gates at Wythall, and past the picturesque church. There was, in sharp contrast to the superannuated Fleetlines we had been riding on the day before, barely a squeak or rattle from the 60-year-old bodywork, whilst the Daimler's engine purred gently, putting its descendants of the 1970s well and truly to

shame again, this time where noise levels were concerned. The bus was expertly driven by John James, to whom the credit also falls for the high standard of presentation of both the interior and the exterior of the vehicle. By the time we had arrived at Kings Heath for the customary photo-call, the bus was glistening with water, and condensation abounded — a magical slice of nostalgia indeed!

Centre stage for a Dictator

A second event recalled by the day was the 20th anniversary of the last Birmingham standards. A representative selection of these elegant machines was assembled. Present were 1950 Crossley DD42/7 2489, 1950 Guy Arab 1V 2533, 1953 Guy Arab 1V 2976 and 1954 Daimler CVG6 3225 — the first and the last bodied by Crossley, the other two by Metro-Cammell, it taking a highly trained eye to spot the difference!

The Birmingham halfcab line-up was completed by two further exposed radiator types — Metro-Cammell-bodied Daimler CVA6 1486, and Brush-bodied Leyland PD2/1 1685. However, an unpublicised event was scheduled to take place at 13.15. We were instructed to take up position outside the lower building, and await the raising of the roller shutter. At the appointed time, the unfamiliar sound of a Morris-Commercial petrol engine accompanied the raising of the said shutter to reveal Birmingham 90, a 1931 Morris Dictator with single-deck Metro-Cammell body, ready to proceed across the site to take its place alongside the assembled double-deckers. This it duly did, with little ceremony, but much clattering and blue smoke, not to mention a steady stream of hot water, piddling from the nether regions of the engine. Nevertheless, she proved she was a runner, able to delight the crowd and make a splash — so to speak!

No90 (OV 4090), one of a batch of ten 34-seat forward-entrance saloons, became first a mobile caravan and then a garden shed, when sold out of service. She is reasonably complete, externally, although much hard work is needed before she can be regarded as restored.



Fond Farewell for a Fleetline

The final strand was a Fleetline goodbye tribute. As mentioned, the previous day had seen the last Fleetlines in service in Birmingham, bringing to a close an era which began 35 years earlier. Numerically the last, 7000 was handed over the previous day to Aston Manor Museum of Transport, being also the last Fleetline to come off service, shortly after 16.00. It was joined at Wythall by 6477, another of the last five performers, and preserved examples 3788, 4613 and 6311. As the last three mentioned are all beautifully turned out in PTE colours, we hope that at least 7000 will be preserved in Travel West Midlands livery.

Well, it was time, at the close of the day, for a well-earned winter's rest — time to carry out those repairs both major and minor. We doubt there really will be much hibernation behind those closed doors!



Top:
90 emerges from behind closed doors!

Above:
1107 waits at Kings Heath with correct destination display, before completing the last run of the day.

UNUSUAL COACH PRESERVED

This attractive 7ft 6in wide coach was new to Downes (trading as Otter Coaches), Ottery St Mary, Devon. It was the first new vehicle purchased by that concern, remaining with it for its entire working life, being collected from the Duple works at Blackpool in time for the 1970 season — the body is a Vega 31. It was primarily acquired to operate local Dartmoor tours for summer visitors. Until its retirement in 1992, one of its other regular duties was an annual trek to Harwich to collect foreign visitors, delivering them to the Sidmouth Folk Festival and returning them afterwards — quite a pilgrimage for a Bedford SB5! A more mundane task in recent years involved school contract work, for which the front pair of seats ahead of the door were labelled 'crew use only'. Had the contract not specified a power door in 1992, TIA 400H may still have been taking children to school today!

It was purchased for preservation in January of this year by Dave Norman, and David Hutchings. Dave Norman, of City of Portsmouth Preserved Transport Depot, said that it would make an ideal vehicle for driver training, and assured us that it was still capable of sustaining 50 mph!

PICTURE: PHILIP LAMB



AJN 825 — ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Following its serious fire, ex-Westcliffe-on-Sea ECW lowbridge-bodied Bristol K5G AJN 825 has been put on the road to recovery. Most of the damaged panelling has been removed, and replacement seats and glazing obtained. It is hoped that by the time you read this, restoration will have begun.

It is seen here outside Eastern National's Clacton depot, about to depart for Chelmsford, where the work will be carried out.

PICTURE AND INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY MARTIN FARMER

ON THE MOVE

John G. Lidstone with news of buses in preservation

Former South Yorkshire Ailsa LWB 383P is now with the Midland Bus Museum ex-Gilmour of Kilmarnock.

The Wessex Transport Society's *Wessex bi-monthly Review*, shows good progress being made by the Hull Municipal Transport Museum with a thorough restoration of Hull AEC Regent III KRH 338.

Meanwhile, Preston's legendary workshops have completed a magnificent restoration of its former Leyland Titan PD3, PRN 761, now back in original maroon and cream livery.

News from the Ribble Vehicle Preservation Group is of the acquisition from the Leyland Museum of a remarkable unregistered 1959 Leyland Atlantean with MCW bodywork, used as a test-bed for Self Changing Gears! However it is intended as a source of spares for 'Gay Hostess' Atlantean coach, SFV 421 and standard Scout Atlantean, PRN 145.

Southdown Queen Mary Leyland PD3. 972 CUF is now in preservation, after use at Kilpurney Farm, Newtyle, whilst already restored BUF 260C is for sale by its Cambridgeshire owner.

Former Liverpool Leyland Panther FKF 918F is now acquired for preservation from Maghull Coaches with the intention of restoring it to Merseyside PTE condition with Wirral-division blue logos as run from Wallasey in 1979.

Ex-Ipswich and Leeds Leyland Atlantean UNW 403H now resides at the Eastern Transport Collection, in slightly weatherworn Ipswich colours.

Newly-restored former Crosville Bristol RE UFM 52F is now outshopped in dual-purpose NBC livery and made its first outing to the Fleetwood rally in July. Bristol LH VDV 107S, ex-Devon General, is now in NBC red, as is now-rare Perkins-engined/flat-screen LH6P WNG 102H, ex-Eastern Counties.

Ex-North Western Bristol RELL6G SJA 382K is now in preservation with a new owner in Bath, ex-Northern Bus.

Former Brighton & Hove/Southdown Bristol Bristol VRT/SL3 convertible open-topper TPN 103S - the only one of this small production run of convertibles to be preserved - is now back in NBC green livery in which it was new, with Southdown fleet names restored.



OLD MO BACK ON HER OLD ROUTE

With a full complement of 32 passengers, Thames Valley Tilling-Stevens MO 9324 recreated a piece of history by running between Reading and Henley on 28 September, the day of the Reading Buses' open day and rally. The Brush-bodied vehicle was one of 14 model B9As delivered in 1927, and spent much of its early life on this route. Having survived the war, it passed to a showman, finally falling derelict near Portsmouth.

Taken to Amberley, the long restoration over many years has included building a replica body. MO 9324 is now once again resplendent in its fully-lined livery, complete with gold fleet names — a credit to its restorers.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY E. NIXON. PICTURE: T. WRIGHT

Aintree Coachline, Bootle

Former Metroline Leyland Titan KYV 357X is now confirmed taken into stock here along with former Mainline Leyland Tiger/Duple Dominant IV YPD 122Y and Volvo B10M-50/Alexander CH47/35F F254 OFP ex-Crawford of Neilson.

Leyland National VBG 95V is now repainted and numbered L5.

MCW Metroliner E26 ECK is now with Pandh of Prenton, Leyland Atlantean FVR 250V passing to Norths of Sherburn-in-Elmet, twin A759 NNA for scrap.

Prototype Leyland Titan TMX 535R is reported sold to a preservationist in the Leyland area and now re-registered back to its original BCK 706R.

Applebys, Conisholme

A batch of late Leyland Atlanteans has come from Stagecoach Manchester, AN68D/1R/Northern Counties H43/32F ANA 613Y, A661/4/5/74/87 HNB and A714 LNC.

Bebb, Llantwit Fardre

R36 AWO is another Setra S250/C44Ft for National Express work.

Beeline FB

Further ex-Centrewest RW-class Renault S75/Wright B28F are RW31/2/6-8, 42-53 (HDZ 5431 etc). RW31/2/6-8 are at Slough and RW42-53 at Bracknell. These join RW11-11/3-30 (HDZ 5401 etc), with RW33-35, 39-41 still due. RW57, 63-57/9, 81/2/4/5/7/9/90 are bound for Leicester Citybus.

Now withdrawn are Mercedes-Benz 609Ds 162/75/8 (E458/71/4 CGM), 709Ds 195/8 (G645/8 YVS), Leyland Nationals 326/9/36/42/9/59 (TBL 170/4M, GPK 736N, HPK 501N, KPA 370P, NPJ 484R), Bristol VRT/SL3s 533/60 (CJH 144V, GGM 90W) and Leyland Tigers 752/4 (TJ1 4821/4, YPJ 203/6Y), 162 passing to Buger of Bristol, 175/8 to Express Travel of Speke, 329/36/42/9 to South Wales Transport, 533/60 to Eastern Counties and 752/4 to Essex Buses (Eastern National/Thamesway).

Bee Line AA

120-2 (M120-2 YCM), 352 (MCA 678T) and 601/2/9/16/54-6/59/67/9/70 (DBV 135/6Y, B148 TRN, B960 WRN, PFM 126/8/9Y, A141 SMA, GFM 110X, A148/7 UDM) have passed to North Western.

Blackburn Transport

New are Optare MetroRider MR15/B29F 637-40 (P637-40 ARN), joined by Volvo-engined National Greenway 431 (EXI 2455) from Express Motors of Bontnewydd. This was new as Southdown's first Leyland National, BCD 801L.

Withdrawn are Leyland Atlanteans 135/8/9 (WRN 135/8/9V) and Leyland Tiger coaches 317/9/20 (B417 CMC, D319/30 NEC). Previously-withdrawn Leyland Leopard coach 303 (KJF 3V) is with Happy Days of Woodseaves, 317 with Davies & Jones of Letterston, whilst 319/20 are with Leon of Finningley.

Black Prince, Morley

Following the Traffic Commissioners' enforced fleet reduction (now reported down to 26 rather than 28) some services in the west of Leeds have passed to Leeds City Link. Vehicles retained are Routemasters RM441, 2060, 2122 (LDS 341A, WLT 441; ALM 60B; CUV 122C), Volvo Citybus B10M-50 C101 (C101 CUL), Scania BR112DHs 82-101 (JBO 82-92W, PTG 93-101Y), N113CRB S113 (F113 OMJ), Optare MetroRiders 167-9 (K167/8 FYG, N289 DWY), Optare Vectas 71/3-5 (M71 WYG etc), Optare Prisms 577 (N577 EUG) and Scania L113CRBs 653-5 (P653-5 VWX).

Thus withdrawn (subject to confirmation) are Volvo Ailsa Mk III V1-3 (A101-3 SUU), Ailsa B55s V94/5, 101/8 (KSD 94W etc) and B55-10s 186, 249, 783 (UCS 186S, SSN 249S, JOV 783P), National Greenays 213, 549 (213 ONU, LUF 549), Leyland National rebuild 667 (CUF 667S), Leyland Atlantean 519 (MNC 519W), Leyland Olympian B45 prototype 568 (NJA 568W) and Olympians 704/12 (ACM 704/12X).

MCW Metroliner E130 SNY has passed to Cygnet, Royston, but Ailsa LHS 736V and Leyland National LWN 797S passed to Wigley, Carlton (dealer).

Bond Bros, Willington

In stock is Volvo B10M-61/Berkhof C49Ft UJI 452S (D207 VEV), Mercedes-Benz 814D H170 EJU has been withdrawn and sold to NDY, Quarrington Hill (dealer). The company withdrew from its 75-year tradition of bus services between Bishop Auckland and Oakenshaw via Willington on 18 July; Go-OK Travel took up the services the following day.

Border Buses, Burnley

Further Dennis Darts are (H94/8, 101/4/6/37 MOB), 8.55DL3003/Carlyle Dartline B28F ex-Metroline and Mercedes-Benz 709D/ACL C25F M378 FMW, M665 UCT (from dealer stock)

Burnley & Pendle's Viscount Central coaching fleet was acquired on 15 June, bringing with it Neoplan N116/3/C48Ft OJ 201; Volvo B10M-61/Jonckheere C49Ft GSU 552/3, HX1 311, XSU 910 and C51Ft XSU 909; C10M C49Ft XSU 907/8; B10MT-53/Van Hool C48Ft NXI 812 and CH53/13Ft GXI 516; B10MT-50/Plaxton CH53/12Ct GXI 613 and CH54/13Dt NXI 414; Toyota Coaster HDB30R/Caetano Optimo C21F XFK 305; Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Plaxton C53F GSU 551; TRCTL11/3R/Duple C53F GSU 554, XSU 905. Viscount operations are to retain a separate identity from Border.

Colne town services 14/15 and Barnoldswick town services 30/31 were also gained from Burnley & Pendle.

Brewers FB

Further interesting additions are Bristol VRT/SL3/680/ECW H43/31F EWS 744W from Badgerline, Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/27D RHT 512S and TWS 908T from Provincial, further Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R/Alexander H45/33F FSU 78, 114T, LSU 379/81V from Greater Glasgow and AN68D/1R/Northern Counties H43/32F ANA 624/30/44Y, A675/88 HNB and A748 NNA from Stagecoach Manchester.

Also added to stock are Volvo B10M/Plaxton Paramount 3500 C48Ft PSU 626 (F986 HGE) from Mairs of Aberdeen, Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2RH/Plaxton Paramount 3200 C49F WSV 410 (A608 KYG) from Calderline, Toyota Coaster/Caetano Optimo C18F L538 XUT, also from Mairs and Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R/Plaxton Derwent II B55F ABR 868S from Rider York. Fleetnumbers were not confirmed at the time of writing.

Now withdrawn and sold are Leyland Tiger 127 (MKH 59A, B127 CTH), 166/7 (B221 WEU; B491 XOW, VCL 461, B223 WEU), 176-8 (RJI 8029, 948 RJO, SWN 159, B34 UNW; RJI 8030, 300 CUH, B35 UNW; RJI 8031, WCY 701, B36 UNW) and Duple 425s 138/40 (LIL 5068, 300 CUH, E218 CFJ; E218 WWW, 300 CUH, LIL 5068, E207 BOD).

Brighton & Hove GA

The forthcoming orders call for four more East Lancs Cityzen-bodied Scania N113s and, in a new departure, 21 Volvo B10BLEs with Wright Renown bodywork. Also on order are two Volvo B10M coaches with Plaxton Excaltur bodywork. When these are delivered next spring, over half the fleet will be less than three years old; a total of 107 new vehicles will have been bought since 1995.

Former Brighton Blue Bus vehicles are rapidly donning fleet livery, with Kent Coachworks of Northfleet treating 78, 83, 89, 126/30/85/6/9/93/4, 213, Hants & Dorset of Eastleigh treating 71/6/9, 96, 192/6 and East Lancs at Blackburn 73. B&H workshops have treated 127/8/78/84/7/98 and 813. BB vehicles carrying overall advertisements have received front-end part-repairs into B&H colours.

Now withdrawn are Renaults 300/1/3/5/6 (H909 SKW, E450/2 EAP, E461/2 GWV) and Leyland Leopard 500 (SPN 669X). Leopard/Willowbrook rebody 197 (PIB 5144, UTD 203T) has been cannibalised. Bristol VRT/SL3s 641/2/93 (XAP 641/2S, EAP 993V) have been delicensed, but 642 is reinstated and 693 is a Eurofare ticket machine trainer at Lewes Road.

Bullock, Cheadle

Another Scania K112/Van Hool Alizée DP47F is E218 FLD from Speedlink, rejoining E213 FLD in the associated Ambassador Coaches fleet.

The last of the ex-Mainline Metrobuses, A105 XWE (following on from B925 CDT and A113/20 XWE), is in service. Leyland National 2 JIL 8217 (A303 JFA) is now B48F, ex-DP47F.

Leyland Fleetlines JIL 8206/7/14 (THX 539, 272S, KUC 216P) are withdrawn, leaving the last two Fleetlines, JIL 8203/8 (OHR 182R, THX 563S) chiefly on schools work. Dennis Javelins M782/3 NBA have gone to a dealer.

Burnley & Pendle ST

Volvo Olympian/Alexander H51/36F 2244/5 (P274/5 VPN) have been transferred from Ribbles stock. Mercedes-Benz L6008Ds 80-83 (C80 OCW, D81-83 UFV) and are now with Western Buses.

Body type

A	Articulated
B	Single-deck bus
C	Coach
DP	Dual purpose, usually coach seats/bus shell
H	Double-decker
L	Lowbridge double-decker (ie with side sunken gangway upstairs. All other types, with conventional gangways are H [Highbridge] regardless of overall height)
O	Open-top
CO	Convertible open-top

Seating capacity

(For double-deckers this is shown with the upper-deck capacity first, eg 43/30, indicating 43 'over' 30. Where these are not known a total figure is given).

Door position

F	Front
R	Rear
C	Centre
D	Dual doors

When platform doors are fitted where these would not normally figure, usually on rear entrance buses, this is indicated by D after the door position. The letter 't' after the door indicates the provision of a toilet whilst L after the door position shows that a wheelchair lift is fitted.

Re-registrations

Where a vehicle is re-registered its previous registration numbers follow in italic type, with the most recent given first where it has been registered more than once.

Vehicle reports should be sent to J. G. Lidstone, 76 Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2XD.

Please mark your envelope 'Fleet News'.



Busways ST

On order are 22 Alexander ALX300-bodied Volvo B10BLEs, the first of which was shown at Coach & Bus '97. Volvo B10M-62 82 (L82 YBB) is now in Flightlink cream and black livery.

Rather surprisingly at least some of the 1985 Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympians, 601-65 (C601-65 LFT) have been advertised for sale.

Cambridge Coach Services BL

Volvo B10M/Plaxton Première 315 (P315 DVE) is now named *Ian Roberts* in memory of the company's late Managing Director.

Cambus ST

The second pair of Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Expressliner 2 C49Ft comprises 455/6 (R455/6 FCE) and these, together with 453/4, are in general use and not restricted to the London Shuttle. New Alexander-bodied Dennis Darts are due imminently as 353-6, for Park & Ride work.

Former London Leyland Titans T645/70/88, 824 (NUW 645/70Y, OHV 688, 724Y) are now quoted as H44/27F, converted from H44/24D. Indicator apertures are covered with vinyls for Cowley Road Park & Ride service 501. They are part of a further batch destined for Stagecoach South, and are only here temporarily. Only Bristol LH 65, Volvo B6s 156/60-3, Bristol VRs 735/7/9/42-7/51/3/5, Metroriders 960/1/4/5/8/71/6/9/90 and Ford Transit 2036 retain Cambus livery. Cambus Local Coach livery is still carried by Olympian 501 and Metroriders 81/2 retain City Centre Shuttle livery. B6s 167-9 carrying dedicated City Rail Link scheme and Lynx 310, B10Ms 315-8 and Dennis Darts 350-2 Park & Ride scheme. The remaining 12 Bristol VRT/SL3s are to be dispensed with as soon as replacements are authorised. Bristol LH6/ECW B43F driver trainer 65 (OFB 965R) remains licensed as a PCV, and represented the company at the recent ECW event; it occasionally appears in service, such as on service 196 to Waterbeach on one occasion fairly recently.

Volvo B6 accident victims 167/9 (L667/9 MFL) are now back on the City Rail Link after repairs, but Iveco 952 (K172 CAV) has been engineless at Cowley Road for some time.

Chester City Transport

Six Scania L113CRLs are reported on order for early delivery. Leyland Lion/Alexander 19 (E938 EDS) now has bus seating upstairs and is now in standard livery ex-Park & Ride. Leyland Fleetline 93 (KFM 193T) has gone for scrap. New this season has been the operation of day excursions to such as Alton Towers, Llandudno and Southport.

City Line FB

New Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer 2 1713 (R713 BAE) was at Showbus recently, twin 1710 (R710 WAE) being illustrated last month — but no reports had been received as to the whole batch.

Classic, Annfield Plain

A further acquisition from the MTL Group is MCW Metrobus DR102/29/Alexander RL H45/31F DEM 759Y. New for the coach fleet is Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Première C49Ft P6 CLR.

Classic Coaches, High Wycombe

Open-top ex-East Yorkshire/United Bristol RELL6G/ECW OB53F PHN 178L has been used on the Buckinghamshire Sunday service network along with ex-Southern Vectis Bristol VRT/SL2 ND 637M. The RE is one of only eight open-top single-deckers in the country.

CMT Buses, Aintree

Leyland Nationals 1062/66/86 (UFG 61S, RUF 45R, BPL 477T) are now reinstated but 1069/70 (NPK 232R, LPB 221P) have been written off. Previously-withdrawn 1063/87 (WYJ 170S, AYR 303T) are now stored, engineless, and 1068 (YPL 413T) and 1070 have been sold.

Colchester Borough Transport AA

Arrivals are Volvo B10M-61s with 1992 East Lincs B49F bodywork 55/7/8, 60/1 (A855 UYM, B857/8/60/1 XYR) from County Bus, though new to Grey-Green, which had them rebodied from coaches. These replace ex-Midland Fox Leyland National 2s — the first withdrawn are 10 and 26 (BVP 810V, EON 826V) — and are in CBT livery, adjusted to Cowie London-style (Colchester and Southend are now part of the London division) with upswept twin maroon bands, though 55 and 60 have been at work in Townlink colours on rail replacement duties due to a derailment at Hatfield Peverel. Leyland Atlantean open-topper 55 (JHK 495N) is now renumbered 95.

MCW Metrobus DR101/12 H43/28D M336 (EYE 336V) remained under preparation by Leaside into September and had still not been delivered. It is expected to be first of a batch which will oust the Leyland Atlantean stock.

County Bus & Coach AA

New is 10.2m Dennis Dart SLF/Wright Crusader B36F SLF165 (R165 GNW), first of three Darts for service 395. The next two will be 10.8m 41-seaters. Also due are 16 SLFs for service 34, which had been expected into Leaside stock. Less usual additions are DAF SB220s with Plaxton Prestige low-floor bodywork, due imminently for service 724, whilst the remaining Iveco 49.10s are due to be replaced by 15 new Mercedes-Benz Varios on order.

Another MCW Metrobus acquired is of note as it was Grey-Green's last, DR102/15/H46/31F M366 (DTG 366V).

Vehicles taken over from West's of Woodford are MCW Metrorider/B23F MR367 (E367 CHE), MR667 (E667 YDT), MR711-5/8/9 (F711 CWJ etc); DAF SB220/Optare Delta B47F OD621 (G621 YMG, A10 BUS, G259 EHD) and OD760 (K760 JVX, K5 BUS); Dennis Dart 9.8SDL/Wright DP40F DW64 (J64 BJN, J9 BUS), 9SDL/Wright B35F DW65 (J65 BJN, J6 BUS), 9.8SDL/Wright B40F DW761/2 (K761/2 JVX, K2 BUS, J12 BUS) and Leyland Swift/Wadham Stringer B39F WS350 (H350 PNO, H20 BUS, A19 BUS, H550 AMT). County Bus vehicles soon appeared on Wests services, whilst ex-Wests Darts have made appearances on such as Harlow town services 802/803.

Leyland Tigers TL15, 20 and 31 (UJN 634Y, OIB 3510, WPH 115Y; UJN 429Y, WPH 120Y; WPH 131Y) and Ford Transit crew-ferry MB845 (C45 WBF) have been withdrawn and sold to Fleet Sales of Wigan (dealer).

Crosville Cymru AA

New are Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver B27F MMM886/7 (R486/7 UCC) — there will be no MMM888 — and Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B39F LDC521/2 (R521/2 UCC). The Darts start a new classification, LDC, and went into service in all-over white whilst MMM886/7 carry yellow Conwy Clipa colours, illustrated in *Buses* October.

Meanwhile, acquisitions continue with Leyland Olympian ONTL11/1R/Roe H43/29F DOL119/22/6 (TPD 119/22/6X) from Londonlinks; Leyland National 2 NL116HLXB/B49F SNG212 (EWX 212Y) from West Riding; Leyland Lynx LX112L102R1/B51F SLC677/8 (E677/8 DCU) from Hunters (new to Moor-Dale, Newcastle) and Iveco 59.12/Mellor B25F N935 ETU from Clydeside (new to Loft's of Mickle Trafford), with another expected. DOL119/22/6 are at Aberystwyth, along with Leyland National 2 SNL727 (MHJ 727V) and Bedford trainer TB1 (JTL 804V), whilst Leyland National 2 SNL206 (LRB 206W) is at New Quay outstation.

Mercedes-Benz 709D/Robin Hood MMM210 (F210 DCC) has been refurbished, repainted and fitted with bus seating. L608D MMM92 (D92 VCC) was used as an office at Llanwrst for two weeks following a petrol leak at a nearby service station.

Leyland Nationals SNL365, 664 (VKE 563S, GMB 664T) and unused SNL558 have been sold for scrap, while the Optare Deltas, SDD701/2 (F701/2 ECC) have gone to Northumbria, replaced by secondhand Lynxes SLC677/8. Leyland Nationals SNL563/89, 660 (HMA 563T, JTV 589T, GMB 660T), Bristol VRT/SL3s DVG446, 505, DVL403/40 (UDM 446V, YMB 505W, JMB 403T, RMA 440V) and Mercedes-Benz minis MMM62, 182 (D962 UDY, D182 VRP) and un-numbered ex-Maidstone & District C213 EKJ and D30 KKP were all noted under cannibalisation at Aberystwyth recently, as was VRT/SL3 DVG506 (YMB 506W) at Rhyl. Also withdrawn are Leyland National SNL673 (MCA 673T) and Bristol VR DVG469 (WTU 469W).

Cumberland ST

An arrival from Stagecoach Manchester is Volvo B6-50/Alexander Dash B40F 283 (M460 XHE), new to East Midland and now at work at Kendal.

A stir has been created by a recent advertisement about vehicles for sale featuring youthful five year-old Volvo B10M-55 717 (K717 DAO), which was still active at Carlisle in mid-August.

Dennis's, Dukinfield

New are Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B37F R572/3 ABA, whilst similar P742/3 HND have returned to Cheshire Bus & Coach off-lease.

Volvo B10M/Plaxton Paramount 3500 G552 SSP is now in full red/grey livery with Dennis's Executive Travel fleetnames and has gained a rear window in its 'Expressliner' solid rear. Mercedes-Benz N593 WND is now with Derwent Coaches of Swallow.

Eastbourne Buses

New is DAF SB220/ikarus 20 (R720 LDY), placed in service in all-over white prior to receiving overall advertising. Dennis Dart 9 (H841 GDY) has followed 7 and 8 (H908 DTP, H840 GDY) to Metrobus.

The Wednesday-evenings Heritage Bus Service saw operation by AEC Regal 11 (AHC 411) and Leyland Titan PD2A 82 (DHC 782E) once each and RT4169 (LYF 228) apparently only twice. The RT is back with Ensign stock and appeared in London in London Pride livery in September.

Eastern National FB

New Mercedes-Benz Vario O.810D/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F P701-8 PWC are numbered 421-8 in the Thamesway Mercedes series, rather than the expected 2701-8 in this fleet's Mercedes series.

Dennis Dart 2807 (L807 OPU), has gone to Eastern Counties. 2808 (L808 OPU) is now at Baintree, breaking the minibus monopoly there for the first time since 1992.

Mercedes-Benz L608D 2236 (C496 BHY) is now in Reserve, but 2248 (C107 HGL) replaces it at Clacton. Two more double-deckers withdrawn are Bristol VRT/SL3s 3225/34 (AYG 850S, NUM 339V) for transfer to Thamesway along with Leyland National 1863 (YEV 321S).

Group codes

AA — Arriva
(formerly
Cowie
Group)
BL — Blazefield
Holdings
EY — EYMS Group
FB — First Bus
GA — Go-Ahead
Group
MT — MTL
Holdings
NX — National
Express
ST — Stagecoach
Holdings
YT — Yorkshire
Traction



Opposite:
R566 UOT is one of a pair of UVG-bodied Dennis Darts recently put to work in North-East Derbyshire by Astons Express Coaches.
TONY WILSON

Left:
A number of Provincial (ex-Red Admiral) Carley-bodied Mercedes 811Ds have found their way into the Brewers fleet, including H994 FTY.
T. S. POWELL

East Kent ST

Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander Sprint B23F 847 (G977 ARV) and B25F 863 (K863 ODY) have come from Hampshire Bus and from Hants & Surrey respectively. 847 is still in its original paintwork.

Leyland Titans now coming into stock will oust most remaining Bristol VRT/SL3s based at Herne Bay (see under Stagecoach South Group heading). Bristol VRT/SL3 convertible open-topper 7621 (UWV 621S) was expected from South Coast Buses, but had not transpired by mid-September. Bristol VRT/SL3s 7668/80 (XJJ 668V, SKL 680X) are now with Hampshire Bus.

East London ST

New Volvo Olympian/Alexander VA47 (P647 SEV) is now re-registered R747 XAR and Dennis Dart SLF SLD12 (P612 SEV) is R712 XAR.

A fleet of circa 60 new Alexander ALX400-bodied Dennis Trident low-floor double-deckers is due for delivery in early 1999 for services 48, 55, 56 and 277. Also expected are a further 12 SLD-class Alexander ALX200-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs for service 276, with 9.94m-length SLDs for service 100. New Alexander and Northern Counties-bodied Volvo Olympians have prompted the withdrawal of many more Leyland Titans from Bow and Romford North Street, which are reappearing with other Stagecoach subsidiaries, or on loan, all over the south east.

The lengthy preparation of Bluebird, Perth AEC Routemasters RM980, 1289 and 1599 (USK 625, XSL 596A, YTS 820A) continues such that forward-entrance RMA5 and 8 (NMY 635/40E) are to be withdrawn when they are ready.

From Selkent come Dennis Dart 8.5SDL3003/Carlyle Dartline B28F DT34/6/7 (G34 TGV etc). Titans T3, 593, 647/8/51/66/71 and 840 (WYV 3T, NUW 593, 647/8/51/66/71Y, A840 SUL) are now on loan to Metrobus, Orpington. Titans sold are T645/70/88/97, 724/31/43/69 (NUW 645/70Y, OHV 688/97, 724/31/43/69Y) to Stagecoach South, T645/70/88 and 724 going straight on loan to Cambus; T643/73 (NUW 643/73Y) are now with Transit, interestingly Stagecoach Devon taking T729/38 (OHV 729/38Y). Meanwhile, Selkent has absorbed Dennis Darts DRL110/7/8/23/7 (K110 SRH etc).

East Midlands ST

Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton C44Ft 664 (R664 TKU) is new, in Flightlink livery.

Express Motors, Bontnewydd

Notes for this operator in *Buses* October were inadvertently accredited to Express Motors of Hulland — with apologies to each. New MAN 11.190/Optare Vecta R1 EMS does indeed belong to Express of Bontnewydd, as the accompanying illustration shows! National Greenway EX1 2455 has passed to Blackburn Transport.

Express Motors, Hulland

MCW Metrorider F197 YBA is now at work, but three of the five Bristol LH6Ls have now been withdrawn — KJD 421P and FBV 271W with ECW bodywork and Plaxton-bodied YVW 902S, the last now with Townsend of Christian Malford.

Express Travel, Speke

Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs Spryte B31F P454-61 DCW are in use on MerseyTravel tendered services 176 (Halewood-City) and 266/288 Circulars in the main. Mercedes-Benz L608Ds D33 UAO and D190 VRP have passed to White Ribbon, East Kilbride.

Fishwick, Leyland

The company won an additional school contract recently, bringing two more Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/31F 29 (AAP 651T) and 31 (HJB 461W) ex-Partridge of Hadleigh. Both arrived in Wycombe Bus livery but were repainted before use.

Flying Banana, Great Yarmouth

Ford Transit C535 TJF has been sold to a private owner for conversion into a motor caravan, whilst Iveco H533 KSG is now with A2B Travel of Prenton. Mercedes-Benz P683 HND is now re-registered P682 HND after it was discovered that the chassis numbers of this and the real P683 HND (with Glossopdale Bus Company, on hire from Cheshire Bus & Coach) were at variance with the plates fitted, upon presentation for their first annual tests.

Glossopdale Bus Company, Padfield

Acquisitions to note are Northern Counties H43/32F-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1Rs ORJ 381/93W and AN68D/1R ANA 609Y.

Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer demonstrator R190 TKU has been noted, along with Northern Counties-bodied Dennis Lance P87 BPL. Mercedes-Benz Vario/Plaxton Beaver 2 P686 HND has also been at work, on lease from Cheshire Bus & Coach.

Go-Ahead Group North East GA

Further Leyland National 2s rebuilt are 4698 and 4708 (FTN 698, 708W), both now with Volvo engine, Voith transmission, Purmo heating and split-level entrance.

DAF MB230LB 9703 (G703 AEF) is now re-registered UGD 735.

Inter-company transfers are of Dennis Dart 8116 (L315 XBB), the last of the Diamond fleet and now with VFM in corporate livery; OK Leyland Atlantean 3471 (AUP 371W) now also with VFM; Dennis Dart 8013 (J613 KCU) at Northern General and OK 2402 (L402 FVN) as first of several Volvo B6-50s to move to Gateshead & District. Withdrawals are Leyland Leopards 9081/2 (LBO 81/2X), Leyland Atlantean 9377 (AUP 377W), Leopards 9933-5 (MCL 933-5P) and 9447 (NWO 447R), Atlanteans 9682 and 9709/21/9/35 (CWG 682V, CWG 709/21/9V, UGD 735).

The last surviving Bristol VRT/SL3 in the fleet, 3401 (JPT 901T), with full-height ECW bodywork, has been sold to a Go-Ahead employee for preservation.

Greater Manchester FB

New is Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown B44F 571 (P571 PBA), which was re-registered R571 YNC before use. It is first of 21 such vehicles, 571-91 (R572-91 SBA), and wears a FirstBus-style new livery of ivory with blue bands and gold lining, as well as featuring the new FirstBus interior. Also new are first of the Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B34F as 6026-39 (R226-39 SBA), along with Pointer 2 6044 (R244 SBA), the first of the batch 6040-80 (R240-80 SBA).

Metrobuses 5314/7/8/20 (D314 LNB etc) are now back from a brief sojourn at PMT, as the contract they were to work did not come to fruition. Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 1821/2 (M207/44 VWU) are now B21F.

Heavy withdrawals continue, the latest being Leyland National 201 (ABA 26T — the last active Mk1 Leyland National in stock), Leyland National 2s 104/9/81 (XTJ 4W, SKF 9T, VBG 81V), Iveco 59.12s 1411/2/48 (M411/2 RND, M248 NNF), MCW Metroriders 1584/91/4 (E258/67/72 REP), Mercedes-Benz 811D 1718 (F598 FAM), Renault-Dodge S56s 1733 (E178 UWF), 1846/64/85 (D846/64 LND, D885 MDB), 1948 (D948 NDB), Leyland Fleetlines 4018/60/77/84/6/95 (XBU 18S, BVR 60, 77, 84/6, 95T), 4104/31 (HDB 104V, KDB 131V) and Leyland Atlanteans 4266/82 (FVR 266/82V), 4320/89 (MNC 520W, ORJ 389W), 4408/11/27/34 (MRJ 408/11W, SND 427/34X), 4510/28 (SND 510/28X), 4642/3/66 (ANA 642/3Y, A666 HNB). Atlanteans 4209/66, 4434, 4556, 4737 and 7834 (ANA 209T, FVR 266V, SND 434X, ANA 556Y, A737 NNA, UNA 834S) have passed to Bradford Traveller, 4356/73, 4400/15 (ORJ 356/73, 400W, SND 415X) to Kingfisher Huddersfield, 4261 (FVR 261V) to Abbots of Leeming.

Wigley, Carlton (dealer) has taken Leyland National 185 (VBG 85V), MCW Metroriders 1585 (E259 REP), 1681/6/7 (D474 PON, E636/29 KYW) for scrap, Wilts & Dorset taking 1576/80 (E121/5 RDW), 1689 (E239 UWR) also being sold, 1693 (E243 UWR) to PVS, Carlton (dealer) also for scrap. 4064/74/93 (BVR 64T etc), 4191 (VBA 191S), 4228/71/8 (ANA 228T, FVR 271/8V), 4310/8/26/34/45/54/87 (MNC 510/8/26/34/45W, ORJ 354/87W) have also been sold.

Halifax JOC

Acquisitions are two Routemasters, former RM324 and 1204 (WLT 324, 204 CLT) which have replaced the well-known Park Royal-bodied AEC Regent III 277 (BCP 671) which has maintained the service since June 1996. RM1204 is in traditional Halifax livery, while RM324 is in the Glasgow livery which originally inspired the Halifax scheme, making a fascinating contrast!

Recently acquired by Motts Travel (Yellowbus of Aylesbury) is Volvo B58/East Lancs reboddy, 641 UTO. Delivered new to Hansons of Huddersfield in 1975 as LUB 521P, and fitted with a Plaxton Panorama Elite III body, it was acquired from Black Prince of Morley, in whose service it was rebodied. Black Prince had in turn acquired the coach from Dunn-line Nottingham, with whom it acquired its cherished mark. PHILIP LAMB



Border Buses of Burnley has acquired this 8.5m Carlyle-bodied Dennis Dart, one of a number surplus to requirements at Metroline in London. 137 (H137 MOB) is seen in service at Colne. PAUL WIGAN



Halton Transport

New are further Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall B43F 80-3 (P342-5 OEI).

Harris, Grays

To summarise, recent double-deck deliveries have been DAF DB250/Northern Counties Palatine II H43/25D P335-7 ROO, Volvo Olympian/East Lancs Pyoneer H51/28D P338-50 ROO and similar, but H51/37F P353-2 ROO, R354-7 XVX. Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs P718 WFR has been on loan, along with Optare MetroRider demonstrator P914 XUG.

In the race to place the first new R-plate vehicles on the road, Harris Bus had Volvo Olympian R354 XVX into service on the 00:03 departure from Ilford to Chigwell Row on newly-acquired London Transport service 150 on 1 August. The earlier part of this working had also been with an R-registered vehicle — Ipswich Leyland Atlantean RDX 35R!

Harris has won yet more tendered bus work in London, low-floor single-deck service 132 (Eltham-Bexleyheath) and low-floor double-deck service 180 (Thamesmead-Lewisham) from January 1998.

Ikarus-bodied DAF SB220 J52 GCX is now out of use following an engine fire.

Hedingham Omnibuses

No vehicles now remain in Tollesbury with Osbornes fleetnames or lettering. Bristol VRT/SL3 L260 (BHJ 368S, *HIL 9273*, *VPF 282S*) is now touring Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire as a 'Kill Your Speed' exhibition unit, twin L261 (CJH 115V) similarly touring Essex and Suffolk, hopefully at modest pace.

Now sold are L264 (GSL 897N) to Parkeston Coach Hire, L272/3 (MNK 427/9V) to Fourways of Chelmsford, L274 (MNK 430V) to G&N of London SW17 and L279 (SUI 2954 (*B444 BAR*) to Hampton Coaches of Westminster.

Holmes, Clay Cross

Plaxton Beaver-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D N789 CWE is reported withdrawn after an accident. Bedford YNT/Plaxton D683 XBC is now with Phillips of Devauden.

JP Travel, Middleton

New deliveries comprise Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver B27F P1, 3 JPT, along with 611D/Mellor C24F P2 JPT and 811D/Plaxton Beaver B31F P6, 8 JPT. A used acquisition is 709D/Beaver B27F L5 BUS from Jim Stones of Leigh.

Kentish Bus & Coach/Londonlinks Buses AA

The Kentish Bus allocation of RMLs is due to pass to South London imminently — they are RML2266, 2301/43/47 (CUV 266C etc), RML2382/3/7, 2410/52, 2505/12/4/23/4/31/3/6/48/7/4/7/86/91 (JJD 382D etc), RML2619 (NML 619E) and RML2715 (SMK 715F). Cambridge Heath-based 115-9, 514-56, 721/3-30/2/3 are to be transferred to Leaside ownership similarly. 120-6/51/60-72, 201-12, 311-6/31/99, 400-2/18/30/1/3-8/40-3, 623-30/85-700/1/4/5/10, 847/9/50/61/5, 969, AN262 and LR21, 24 are now in London & Country ownership, but remain licensed to Londonlinks Buses, now an operating division of London & Country rather than Invictaway.

A mass clear-out of redundant withdrawn vehicles has seen the sale of 100/1/56, 414/6, 648-61, 841-3/5/6/8/51/71/3/5/6/8/82-4, 912, AN196, 203/11/25/24/31/65/8/9/72/3/8/80/9 and LR12/9, 20/2/5/6. Maidstone & District now has 100/1/56, 414/6, South London has 648-61, London Pride has 912 and Crosville Cymru LR22/6.

The driver training fleet is now also transferred to London & Country ownership, comprising A1 (YPL 381T), A22/6 (OLS 540P, TSJ 64S), A33, 34 (CKE 168/9Y) and P42 (D954 VCN).

Lakeland, Hurst Green

New are Mercedes-Benz 814D/Plaxton C32F P962 SFR and P405 MDT. From Wallace Arnold comes Volvo B10M/Van Hool C50Ft K619 KWT (*K801 HUM*).

Leaside Buses AA

Now transferred from South London is MCW Metrobus DR101/12/MCW H43/28D M220 (BYX 220V). Metrobuses M1443-5 (GBU 1, 4, 5V) are now with County Bus and Sampson-liveried Leyland Atlantean open-topper AN110 (MPJ 210L) is now with Southend Transport, possibly for use next year. Meanwhile, Metrobus M336 (EYE 336V) is still under preparation for Colchester. M6 (WYW 6T) was painted all over white — windows included — as a promotion for Cowie's relaunch as Arriva in mid-October.

Leicester Citybus FB

Former London RW-class Dodges continue to enter traffic after overhaul and repaint, most now with single-track front manual blinds and retaining anti-attack screens for drivers. 788 (HDZ 5464) returned from repaint carrying incorrect registration YDZ 5464, but this was quickly put right.

Dennis Dominators 87, 88 and 91 (E87 HNR etc) have now had all their rear windows panelled over and 'super-rear' advertising applied on the resultant large blank area. 252 (MUT 252W) is delicensed and 183 (FUT 183V) is back from its sojourn in Northampton, having been numbered 202 there. 185/7 (FUT 185/7V) are operating on Trent/Barton schools work, whilst D Coaches of Morriston can still muster former 181/6, 253-5/61-3 (FUT 181/6V, MUT 253W etc). 198, 229/60 (YRY 198T, MUT 229/60W), along with Iveco 49.10s 721/5 (F721/5 PFP), Dodge S56s E443/4 JSG, D890 MDB and Leopard MHS 28P, have been sold for scrap. The Leopard had been acquired for cannibalisation. Leopard 30 (VNH 166W) and Iveco 49.10s 730/3/4 (G730 WJU etc) are delicensed as is Renault-Dodge S56 775 (G254 LWF), leaving only 767/70/6 of the ex-Yorkshire Rider S56s still in service, their Chrysler gearboxes apparently being the reason for their replacement with RWs from London.

Ex-Ipswich Dennis Falcons 627-31 all departed to Northampton with Northampton logos in mid-August, but some at least are expected to return shortly. Leopard 3 (KJF 3V) is now with Happy Days of Woodseaves, 7 (YRY 7T) with Malahide Coaches of Malahide, Dublin, re-registered 78 D 929.

Grampian articulated Mercedes-Benz O.405G K1 GRT was back in service in July, but returned to Aberdeen in September.

Limebourne

More 10m Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B33F are R309-15/7/9 NGM, for use on London Transport service 156 and which have LT-sponsored audio equipment which announces bus stops.

Liverline, Bootle AA

All remaining Leyland Atlanteans are to be ousted by former West Riding Group Leyland National 2s imminently. Leyland Nationals 203, 328 (BYW 402V, LPB 209P) have been transferred from North Western.

London & Country AA

A small batch of new Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointers are due for the Guilford Park & Ride service 100 imminently.

Londonlinks vehicles and services at Croydon now fall under L&C control, although retaining a separate operators' licence. Thus taken into stock are:

Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R/Roe H43/30F AN262 (KPJ 262W)

Leyland Olympian ONTL11/1R/Roe H43/29F LR21, 24 (TPD 121/4X)

Dennis Dart 9SDL3034/Northern Counties B35F 120-6/51 (L120 YVK etc)

Dennis Dart 9SDL3053/Plaxton Pointer B35F 160-3 (M160-3 SKR)

Volvo B6/Northern Counties B39F 201-12 (L201-12 YCU)

Leyland National 10351A/1R/B41F 331 (UPB 331S)

Leyland Lynx LX2RG15Z4S/B49F 311-6 (G311-6 DPA)

Leyland Lynx LX112TL11ZR1/B49F 399, 400/18 (D101/2 NDW, D156 HML)

Leyland Lynx LX2R11C15Z4S/B49F 401/2 (G34, 35 VME)

Mercedes-Benz 811D/Plaxton Beaver B31F 430/1/3-8 (L430 CPJ etc)

Optare MetroRider MR17/B29F 440-3 (M440-3 HPF)

MCW MetroRider MF150/38/B25F 847/9/50/1 (E136/40/1/5/9 KYW)

MCW MetroRider MF158/15/B31F 865 (F865 LCU)

Optare MetroRider/B25F 969 (J969 JNL)

Volvo Citybus B10M-50/Northern Counties H45/31F 623-30 (G623-30 BPH)

Volvo Citybus B10M-50/East Lancs H49/39F 701/4/10 (G640 CHF, G643 EKA, G661 DTJ)

Volvo Olympian YN2RC16Z4/East Lancs H44/30F 685-700 (M685-700 HPF)

Also taken into stock are driver trainer Leyland National A1 (YPL 381T), Leyland Leopard/Alexander A22, 26 (OLS 540P, TSJ 64S), Leopard/ECW A33, 34 (CKE 168/9Y) and Freight Rover Sherpa P42 (D954 VCN).

The vintage fleet has been further reduced. RF315 (MLL 952) has passed to Memory Lane Vinatage Omnibus Services for continued service, whilst Aldershot & District-liveried AEC Reliance 315 (MOR 581) is now with a preservationist.

Other sales are of Leyland Atlanteans AN128/31 (UPK 128/31S) and Leyland National 2s 277/86 (BVP 813V, LFR 876X) and 3831 (EON 831V) to The Shires; Duple 425 DC693 (OYD 693) to Browns of Ashford, whilst Leyland Nationals SNB423/98 (YPL 423T, BPL 498T) have gone to PVS, Barnsley; Atlantean AN120 (OCO 120S) and Leyland Nationals 200/13/51/74 and 3641/63 (HPK 502N, KPA 364P, NPJ 472R, TPE 151S, PUK 641R, SOA 663S) passing to Ripley, Carlton (dealer).

London Buses FB

New are 10.2m Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall Capital B37F DML633-41 (R633/4, 835, 636-41 VLX).

London Central GA

AEC Routemaster RM994 (WLT 994) has now gone back to London General off-loan. Driver trainer Leyland Titan T75 (CUL 75V) is now being broken for parts and T363 (KYV 363X) is also out of use.

London General GA

MCW Metrobuses M231/42/4/61/2/75, 321/5/34/86 (BYX 231/42/4/61/2/75V, EYE 321/5/34V, GYE 386W) are on loan to London United (for service 57), while M216/28/35/52/9, 320, 447, 527 (BYX 216/28/35/52/9V, EYE 320V, GYE 447, 527W) have gone to Metrobus, Orpington.

London Pride Sightseeing

As soon as its summer stint with Eastbourne was completed, open-top RT4169 (LYF 228) appeared in London Pride red and silver livery and has replaced Daimler Fleetline 333 (EGP 33J) as the advertising vehicle usually based at the Tower of London — reportedly at the suggestion of the Tower authorities, which preferred to see a more vintage-style vehicle gracing their frontage!

Appearing here for want of a better heading, one of the ex-London DMS-class Fleetlines remodelled as a coach still survives; 31 MOO is now a VIP lounge at the London Irish rugby ground at Sunbury.

Group codes

AA — Arriva
(formerly
Cowie
Group)
BL — BlazeField
Holdings
EY — EYMS Group
FB — First Bus
GA — Go-Ahead
Group
MT — MTL
Holdings
NX — National
Express
ST — Stagecoach
Holdings
YT — Yorkshire
Traction



Seen at the Herdings Terminus of Yorkshire Terrier's Route 49 is this East Lancs-bodied Dennis Dart with the new optional lower height front destination box, 128 (R128 TWF).
TONY WILSON

London Transport

A dozen or so of the remaining Reserve Fleet AEC Routemasters are thought to be destined for Turkey, via PVS, Carlton (dealer).

London United/Westlink

MCW Metrobuses M231/42/4/61/2/75, 321/5/34/86 (BYX 231/42/4/61/2/75V, EYE 321/5/34V, GYW 386W) are on loan from London General for use on service 57.

Olympians allocated to service 140 are being repainted, receiving 'Heathrow Connection' route-branding, L292/3/6/7, 300/4/6-8 being early examples, L300 re-entering service in the dedicated livery but without lettering.

MCW Metrorider MRL86 (F190 YDA) has been sold to Red Rose Travel, Aylesbury.

Maidstone & District AA

Leyland Lynx 2/B49F 3051 (H814 EKJ) is now in stock ex-Kentish Bus, substituted at a late stage for the intended H815 EKJ. Both were new, appropriately, to Boro'line Maidstone. Also acquired are Dennis Dart 9SDL3011/Plaxton Pointer B35F 3149/50 (J220/1 HGY) from Londonlinks. 3150 entered service in this livery, but 3149 was despatched for immediate repaint.

Bristol VRT/SL3 5113 (PKM 113R) has been withdrawn. Iveco 49.10s 1713/4 (L287 EKK, L714 EKO) are now reinstated, but remain unlicensed; Leyland Tigers 2192/3/5/6 (YSU 872/3, J26, 27 UNY) have now been sold, although were reinstated 'on paper' without use before sale. Previously-withdrawn VRs 5105/32 (KKO 105P, WKO 132S) have gone to Wealden, Five Oak Green (dealer), 5113 and 5838 (PKM 113R, BKE 838T) and Leyland Atlanteans 5729/38/43 (SRJ 751R, KPJ 280/75W) passing to Ripley, Carlton (dealer).

Tigers 2192/3/5/6 and 2842/3 (G546 NKJ, G998 RKN) are with **New Enterprise**, renumbered as 7012/3/5/6/51/2. New Enterprise DAFs 7043/4 (J17 AMB, K22 AMB) have gone to Hughes-DAF, Gomersal (dealer), Leyland Leopard 7008 (MPL 134W) passing to Wealden PSV, Five Oak Green (dealer).

Maun Crusader, Mansfield

Another Duple 425/C49Ft J8 WSB is now in stock, but is a replacement for similar LAZ 6976 which suffered accident damage recently.

Leyland Atlanteans MNC 513W and AFY 180X are now in livery, but recently-acquired Marshall-bodied Atlantean JKW 322W retains Stuarts of Dukinfield colours, JKW 335W having operated for a while so, but now thought withdrawn.

Mayne, Manchester

The second Scania N113DRB/East Lancs Cityzen DPH45/33F of the latest pair is 9 (R109 YBA). It appeared at Coach & Bus '97. New Marshall Capital-bodied Dennis Dart 24 (R24 YNC) is also in stock.

This operator one of many to take advantage of Stagecoach Manchester's culling of late Leyland Atlanteans recently, adding AN68A/1R/Northern Counties H43/32F 7 and 32/5 (SND 476/83/53X) to stock.

Relatively unusual acquisitions for this fleet are DAF MB230DKFL615/Plaxton C53F 71/2 (E644 DAU, D634 WNU) from Trent Buses. 72 is now C57F and re-registered JAZ2 5172.

MCH, Uxbridge

New Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814 R934 NDC and R778 ECT are in use on hotel contracts in the Heathrow area.

MK Metro/Premier Buses

Now in service with MK are Mercedes-Benz Vario/Plaxton Beaver 2 107-10/2/3 (R107 DNV etc). Iveco 59.12/Marshall 114-9 (R114-9 DNV) are due by the end of the year.

Acquisitions are Mercedes-Benz 709D/TBP B29F 84/5 (M884/5 DDS) from Thompson of South Bank, Cleveland and Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R/Duple B55F 462 (LPY 462W) from South Lancashire Transport; 709D/Marshall B27F 106 (L206 MAV) from Booth & Wright of Wingham; Leyland Swift LBM67/2RS/PMT DP37F 446 (H946 LRE) from Bortherton of Rachub and Leyland Olympian

ONTL11/1R/ECW H46/31F ACM 704/12X and Olympian prototype B45.TL11/1R/Northern Counties H43/30F NJA 568W from Black Prince of Morley. 84, 85, 106 are based at Huntingdon, 88, 446/62 at Milton Keynes. The as-yet-un-numbered Olympians are intended to oust the remaining three Bristol VRT/SL3s at MK, which are then due for withdrawal or possible transfer to Premier Buses at Huntingdon. Meanwhile Bristol LH6L/ECW B43F MGR 656P has arrived at Milton Keynes from Classic Buses, Annfield Plain, another of Julian Peddle's operations. At the time of writing it was not known whether or not this was for service.

Withdrawals have been of 17, 55, 92, 225/37/54/7/68/71-3/90 of which 7, 17, 55 and 92 are due to go to Erith Commercials (dealer), 225/71 to PVS, Carlton (dealer), 254/7/68 to Blytheswood of Glasgow (dealer) and 272/90 to Hyde of Tilsworth. Only 18 VRs remained in service at Huntingdon by September, 203/7-10/7-9/24/6/38/42/6/8/56/9/89/95.

A partial renumbering of MK Metro and Premier Buses vehicles has been achieved, so that minibuses are now numbered below 200, double-deckers between 200 and 299 and single-deckers from 400 upwards:

Volvo B6/Alexander 426-30 (L426-8 XVV, M429/30 BNV) are unchanged
Leyland Olympian/Alexander 650-3 and 711/2 (H650-3 VVV, K711/2 ASC) are now 250-3/11/2
Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW 723/5/31-3/50/1 (LFJ 853/4W, FDV 809/38V, LFJ 868W, FAO 417/8V) are now 295/57/09/38/68/17/8
Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW 871-3 (TNH 871-3R) are now 271-3, 903/8/10/26/48/53/4/72 (CBD 903T, FRP 908/10T, ONH 926V, VVV 948/53/4W, KRU 846W) are now 203/8/10/26/48/56/54/46 respectively (note 953 is now 256).

Mercedes 709D/Plaxton Beaver B23F J988 TVU is numbered 88.

Grateful thanks go to Mark Garrett of the PSV Circle for most of this month's notes. Meanwhile Messrs P. Walduck and C. Cox have started a Milton & Keynes District PSV Group; details (see please) from 195 Broadlands, Netherfield, Milton Keynes MK6 4HN.

Merry Hill Mini, Oldbury NX

Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR/MCW H43/33F 6960/5 (WDA 960/5T) are both outshopped in all-over white as 'Cortesy Buses' and are the first full-sized vehicles in this fleet. Fleetnumbers are carried on their indicator blinds rather strangely.

Mercedes-Benz O.810D/Plaxton Beavers 251-8 are correctly registered 251-60 (P251-60 RUM).

Vehicles are now appearing with Travel Merry Hill trading name, with a livery of white with green and blue diagonal stripes.

Metrobus, Orpington

Further new vehicles are Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B40F 58 (R58 GNW), with a further five 10m Pointer-bodied SLFs due for January delivery.

The MCW Metrobuses mentioned last month are now being supplemented by the hiring of East London Leyland Titan TNLXB2RRSp/Park Royal H44/26D T3 (WYV 3T) and Leyland H44/24D-bodied T593, 647/8/51/66/71, 840 (NUW 593, 647/8/51/66/71Y, A84 SUL) for schools work during September, T3 in Stagecoach livery, the others in all-over red.

Ex-Eastbourne Dart H841 SDY is numbered 59, Duple-bodied DAF E957 GGX now being numbered 62, but passed to East Surrey.

Metroline

The new 10.2m Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B36F DL12-21 (R112-21 RLY) are dedicated to service 90. Due imminently are a fleet of 32 10.2m dual-door Dennis Dart SLFs, to be classed DLD and numbered DLD22-53 (R122-53 RLY) for services 189 and 316.

Maintaining a long tradition of overseas visits, Routemaster open-topper RM644 (WLT 644) accompanied DLS1 on travels to Kassel, Germany to further the low-floor partnership between Metroline and KVG, the city bus operation there. An earlier visit in March 1995 with LLW-class Dennis Lancs caused much interest in the low-floor concept.

Withdrawn and sold are Leyland Titans T399, 475/9 and 518 (KYV 399X etc) to Dunn Line of Nottingham whilst Dennis Darts DT100/2/4/9/11/2/7/9-21/7-31 (H620 MOM, H102/4/9/11/2/7/9-21/7-31 MOB) passed to Rossendale Transport and DT106/37 (H106/37 MOB) to Border of Burnley.

The new Volvo B10M-62/Van Hool Alizée C48F for Brents stock are correctly P845/6 WUG (not WVG).

Midland/Stevensons AA

The final former London DMS-class Fleetline in Stevensons stock is the rebuilt/re-registered 'amalgam' CBF 31Y, which is usually employed as a tree-lopper. However, it was noted in use at a charity event recently, at which people absalld down its exterior from the upper deck!

Visiting Hastings recently was M519 NCG, a Volvo B10M with Plaxton Bodywork in a new coach livery for Harris of Grays, Essex. TERRY S BLACKMAN



Travel Your Bus has had two low-floor DAF SB220s with Plaxton Prestige bodywork recently, one of which is 35 (R396 XDA) in the orange version of the corporate TWM livery. S. G. RICHARDS



Midland Red South ST

New are Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Expressliner 34/5/7 (R34 AKV etc), 35 and 37 being noted employed on National Express service Black. A transfer from Bluebird Buses is B10M-60/Plaxton Expressliner 21 (J456 FSR).

A further ex-Busways Leyland Atlantean is AN58A/2R/Alexander AL H48/31F 991 (MVK 558R), whilst 985 (AVK 16TV) is thought first of its type into Stagecoach livery here.

Leyland Tiger/Plaxton 87 (498 FYB, CDG 207Y) is now again re-registered to RBD 636Y, prior to disposal, its mark now being carried by Duple-bodied DAF 58 (9984 PG, C253 HUX). Ex-David R. Grasby B10M-61/Ikarus 69 (E422 KAC, 6267 AC, E315 NWK) is now again re-registered, to 4012 VC and carries Stagecoach Rugby fleetnames.

MK Metro/Premier Buses

Now in service with MK are Mercedes-Benz Vario/Plaxton Beaver 2 107-10/2/3 (R107 DNV etc). Iveco 59.12/Marshall 114-9 (R114-9 DNV) are due by the end of the year.

Acquisitions are Mercedes-Benz 709D/TBP B29F 84/5 (M884/5 DDS) from Thompson of South Bank, Cleveland and Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R/Duple B55F 462 (LPY 462W) from South Lancashire Transport; 709D/Marshall B27F 106 (L206 MAV) from Booth & Wright of Wingham; Leyland Swift LBM6T/2RS/PMT DP37F 446 (H946 LRE) from Bortherton of Rachub and Leyland Olympian ONTL11/1R/ECW H46/31F ACM 704/12X and Olympian prototype B45.TL11/1R/Northern Counties H43/30F NJA 568W from Black Prince of Morley. 84, 85, 106 are based at Huntingdon, 88, 446/62 at Milton Keynes. The as-yet un-numbered Olympians are intended to oust the remaining three Bristol VRT/SL3s at MK, which are then due for withdrawal or possible transfer to Premier Buses at Huntingdon.

Only 18 VRs remained in service at Huntingdon by September, 203/7-10/7-9/24/6/38/42/6/8/56/9/89/95. Withdrawals have been of 17, 55, 92, 225/37/54/7/68/71-3/90 of which 7, 17, 55 and 92 are due to go to Erith Commercials (dealer), 225/71 to PVS, Carlton (dealer), 254/7/68 to Blytheswood of Glasgow (dealer) and 272/90 to Hyde of Tilsworth.

A partial renumbering of MK Metro and Premier Buses vehicles has been achieved, so that minibuses are now numbered below 200, double-deckers between 200 and 299 and single-deckers from 400 upwards: Volvo B6/Alexander 426-30 (L426-8 XVV, M429/30 BNV) unchanged

Leyland Olympian/Alexander 650-3, 711/2 (H650-3 VVV, K711/2 ASC) now 250-3/11/2
Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW 723/5/31-3/50/1 (LFJ 853/4W, FDV 809/38V, LFJ 868W, FAO 417/8V) now 295/57/09/38/68/17/8

Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW 871-3 (TNH 871-3R) now 271-3, 903/8/10/26/48 (CBD 903T, FRP 908/10T, ONH 926V, VVV 948W), now 203 etc, 953/4/72 (VVV 953/4W, KRU 846W) now 256/54/46.

Mercedes 709D/Plaxton Beaver B23F J988 TVU is numbered 88.

Grateful thanks go to Mark Garrett of the PSV Circle for most of this month's notes.

MTL MT

Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointers, 7533-47 (P533-47 NBU), are with Wirral Peninsula Buses at Laird Street, displacing Volvo B6s and Optare CityPacers to Gilmoos.

Nineteen Leyland Atlanteans are now based at Lancashire Travel St Helens for schools contracts. Southport & District now has ex-GM Volvo/Wright 6547-52. Former Southport Leyland National 2s 6109/31 are at MTL Training at Gilmoos, in training school livery.

Leyland Nationals 6008/85, 7002 (SKF 8T, VBG 85V, RKA 887T) have been scrapped by Barnsley dealers, with 6081, 7004 (VBG 81V, XTJ 4W) to follow at Wigley, Carlton. 6099 (VBG 99V) has passed to PVS, Barnsley (dealer).

MTL London MT

Forty low-floor double-deckers are due for services 43 and 134, in early 1999.

Newport Transport

MCW Metroriders 37/8 (E37/8 UBO) have been sold to Boyd & Chick of Newport, joining seven other ex-Newport vehicles there.

NIBS, Wickford

Additions are Leyland National 2 NL116HLXB/1R/B52F ARN 891/3/4Y, new to Ribble.

Double-deck stock has also increased in recent months and now comprises Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW MAU 142P, NDL 652R, BIL 4710 (STW 25W) and DNG 232T, along with former London DMS-class Daimler Fleetline CRL6/MCW TGX 892M, THM 705M, GHM 797N and SMU 721N.

Other single-deckers are unusual Neoplane F616 CWJ and, with front end remodelled with Plaxton parts, E101 VWA, Renault-Dodge S56/East Lancs BIL 4419, 6538 (C201/2 YDX, new to Ipswich) and Mercedes-Benz 811D/Marshall L890/1 UVE and N811 CSC bought new. Coaches are Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4Rs BIL 4539, 7894, 9406 (VMJ 960S, LVS 431V, CTM 404T).

Northampton Transport FB

Now in stock are Leyland Tiger TRBL10/3ARZA/Alexander N B55F 406/7 (G56 RND, F37 ENF) from Leicester Citybus, also Dennis Javelin 8.5SDL1903/Duple 320 C35F LSK 527 (E151 XHS) from Kirkpatrick of Deeside.

North Birmingham Busways, Erdington

Recent acquisitions are Leyland Atlantean AN68D/1R/Northern Counties H43/32F 70, 72 and 96 (A700 HNB, A702 LNC, A696 HNB) from Stagecoach Manchester. These have replaced former Plymouth Atlanteans 25, 29 and 30 (STK 125/9/30T), which have passed to Guide Friday for open-top conversion for sightseeing work next year.

Atlantean 17 (JFV 317S) now wears slightly revised livery with more green around its lower saloon windows and a new style fleetname to match the fleetnumbers.

Northumbria AA

New are Optare MetroRider/B31F 902-7 (P902-4 DRG, R905-7 JNL). Meanwhile, acquisitions are Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Duple 320 C53F 202 (XSV 689) and TRCTL11/3R/Duple Laser C53F 219-22 (TSU 636, C256 SPC; 869 SVX, YOT 607, VAY 879, A179/80/2 MKE) all from Maidstone & District.

Operations under the Hunters name ceased on 2 August and as a result, Hunters vehicles are now renumbered, such that 52-54 (E820-2 BTN) are now 820-2; 56-60 (P56-59, 61 XTN) are 897-901 and 82-88 (BPT 923/17S, HUP 759T, DUP 745S, PAJ 827X, CPT 738S, SGR 777V) are now 530/26/49/43/90/40/58 respectively, the latter batch thus regaining former Northumbria fleetnumbers. Hunters stock went to Jesmond, Blyth and Ashington in the main.

Now withdrawn are Freight Rover Sherpas 41, 45, 906/8/24/36/58 (D930/3/06/8/24/36 VCN, D958 EOW), Leyland Leopard 240 (YEL 97Y), Leyland Atlantean 503 (MVK 522R), Bristol VRT/SL3s 554/79/85/9 (OBR 772T, APT 807/18W, MEF 826W), Leyland National 737 (JTH 765P) and Leyland National 2s 778/9/85 (JTH 765P, APT 124/5W, A139 FDC). Ex-Moor-Dale Leyland Lynxes 10, 11 (E676/7 DCU) are earmarked for early transfer to Crosville Cymru, Dennis Darts 20-22 (K73-75 KRG) for North Western stock.

Disposals are of 45 (D933 VCN) to Boldon Executive Coaches, Boldon; 99 (KUB 542V) to Lough Swilly via North East Bus Breakers (dealer); 240 (YEL 97Y) to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer); 500 (MCU 98K) to Allman of Sealand; 503 (MVK 522R) to Kingsley of Birtley; 554/79/85/9, 737/78/9/85 (OBR 772T, APT 807/18W, MEF 826W, JTH 765P, APT 124/5W, A139 FDC) and un-numbered NTY 906R all to Lister of Bolton (dealer); 906 (D906 VCN) to a private buyer in Greenhead; 908/24/36/58 (D908/24/36 VCN, D958 EOW) to North East Bus Sales, Annfield Plain (dealer).

North Western AA

Further news of the Transform Group, which consists of a consortium of Cegelec, AEG and North Western is that it appears that low-floor articulated single-deckers are being considered instead of double-deckers. The first service is to be from Liverpool waterfront to the City Centre via Wavertree Technology Park, Old Swan and Page Moss.

New are Scania L113CRL/Northern Counties B43F 1050-5/7/8/60/1 (P250 NBA, R51 XVM, P52/3 MVU, R54 XVM, R255 WRJ, R57 XVM, P58 MVU, P260 NBA, P61 MVU), based at Skelmersdale with 1056/9 due to follow. A number of Leyland National 2s are now in stock, all believed due to go to Liverline to replace the entire Leyland Atlantean stock there; so far noted are ex-West Riding NAT 202V, VBG 88/9V, LRB 203/4/17W and ex-Stevensons, Uttoxeter MHJ 725V and STW 18W.

Vehicle changes will mean that very shortly, there will be no Bristol VRTs, Dennis Dominators or Leyland Atlanteans left in service. All remaining Dominators are also due to head south to London.

Inter-company transfers see 120-2 (M120-2 YCM), 352 (MCA 678T) and 601/2/9/16/54-6/9/67/9/70 (DBV 135/6Y, B148 TRN, B960 WRN, PFM 126/8/9Y, A141 SMA, GFM 110X, A148/7 UDM) all arrive from Bee Line, but 282 (NTU 12Y), 397/8 (L532/3 EHD) depart to Arrowline and 203, 328 (BYW 402V, LPB 209P) to Liverline.

Group codes

AA — Arriva
(formerly
Cowie
Group)
BL — Blazefield
Holdings
EY — EYMS Group
FB — First Bus
GA — Go-Ahead
Group
MT — MTL
Holdings
NX — National
Express
ST — Stagecoach
Holdings
YT — Yorkshire
Traction



Some of the Yorkshire Rider constituents are currently running buses in plain red livery. They are especially prevalent with Rider York, where certain routes have new and nearly new Dennis Darts, all in plain red. 3321 (P834 YUM) is a Dennis Dart SLF with Plaxton Pointer bodywork.

STEPHEN MORRIS

The operations of Star Line and Bee Line are to be combined, with Star Line retained as a branding name for Manchester Airport-centred coaching activities.

1291 (M931 EYS) now carries route branding for service H5 (Liverpool-Warrington).

Nostalgibus, London N1

The latest acquisitions are perhaps rather non-nostalgic in the form of ex-MTL Leyland Olympian ONTL11/1R/Alexander DPH43/25F A316/7 GLV.

Ok Travel, Bishop Auckland GA

A major renumbering has taken place. With grateful thanks to correspondent Stephen Briggs, details are shown in the table below.

Optional Bus, Horsforth

This new operator uses Leyland Nationals in a dark/light green with red stripe, almost identical to London & Country. Vehicles owned are B41F-bodied YPL 433T and YPF 766T, along with B44F JTU 593T.

Oxford GA

Volvo B10M-60/Plaxton C53F 164/5 (H950/1 DRJ) are arrivals from Shearings, whilst the ex-London Northern Counties-bodied Volvo B10Bs in use include 651-4/6 (K125-8/30 BUD).

Brighton Blue Bus Leyland Leopard/Willowbrook Warrior rebody 85 (PIB 8145, *UTD 204T*) has been noted at Cowley Road, possibly for use as a driver trainer.

PMT FB

Another new Optare MetroRider/B29F is IPC396 (R396 ERE), in Interurban livery for Biddulph-Hanley service B6. Two new Mercedes-Benz O.810s are due for Burslem, one for Crewe and the balance of those on order for Newcastle-under-Lyme.

MMM586 is now route-branded for service 217 (Leek-Harrogate), MMM587/8 for service 106 (Longton-Leek), SAD806 for 101 (Leek-Stafford) whilst IDC959 has been outshopped in allover grey (thought as a base for Interurban livery).

De-roofed Leyland Olympian DOG770 (KFM 113Y) is now back in service with parts donated by newer DOG784 (A146 UDM). Bristol VRT/SL3 DVG609 (VCA 464W) was noted at Chester with parts removed, whilst former Devaway VW LT55/Optare CityPacer E213 PWY was also present, understood to be being prepared for export (along with another, unidentified).

Bristol VRT/SL3 OFA 647R, now with the Jesus Army, was noted recently in Toxteth.

Pandh Travel, Wallasey

Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean JKW 284W is now in stock.

Pete's Travel, West Bromwich

New are Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs P746 HND and R66, 86 XNE, along with East Lancs Spryte-bodied R522 YRP. Similar Plaxton-bodied P742 HND is at work in allover white with P743 HND in Busy Bus Co yellow livery.

Phoenix North West, Blackpool

New is Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F R814 LFV.

Pilkington, Accrington

Leyland National WFR 392V is in traffic, re-registered PIB 6434. Former Fishwick Leyland National XCW 956R and ex-North Western HMA 568T are now also being prepared for use, the former now also being re-registered PIB 8076. Dodge S56s D830 RYS and D898 DSF are now re-registered PIB 3705, 4290.

Pioneer, Rochdale

A new arrival is Marshall Minibus P872 TAV.

Premier Travel Services ST

Two new Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Expressliners are 453/4 (R453/4 SCE), with another pair due.

Volvo B10M 439 (J739 CWT) suffered an arson attack whilst on a National Express duty in the West Country recently, but is now back in traffic after repairs, but 436/7 (J706/2 CWT) have now gone back off-lease, with 425-7/30 (G525-7/30 LWU) also due to go imminently.

Bristol Lodekka FLF6G open-topper 552 (JAH 552D) is retained on fleet strength, but in reserve status.

Provincial FB

The 16 Plaxton Pointer B40F-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs on order are to become 603-23 and are intended to convert services 5 and 41 to low-floor and will thus be the first low-floor vehicles in Portsmouth. 608 was due to be exhibited at Coach & Bus '97. A modified version of the red and cream livery is to be carried on this batch of vehicles also.

An unregistered Wright Renown-bodied Volvo has been inspected at Hoeford, whilst Rider Group Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B35F 3310 (P823 YUM) has been on loan for a day to display the standard FirstBus interior.

OK TRAVEL, BISHOP AUCKLAND — FLEET RENUMBERING

Chassis/body	Old number	New number
Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander	2671-9 (M671-9 RAJ)	471-9
Optare MetroRider	2003 (M3 GYP)	403
Optare MetroRider	2933/8/41 (J933 JJR etc)	333/8/41
DAF SB220/Optare	2201-5 (J201-5 VHN)	4801-5
Dennis Lance/Alexander	2110 (J110 SPB)	4768
Dennis Lance/Plaxton	2141 (L141 YTY)	4774
Leyland Leopard/Willowbrook	9331 (YBO 331, <i>BVP 794V</i>)	4831
Leyland Leopard/East Lancs	9079/90 (LBO 79X, PWO 90Y)	4832/3
Leyland National (Volvo-engined)	2475, 2602 (NPJ 475R, RAU 608R), 2190 (THX 190S)	4826-8
Rear-engined Leyland Tiger/ECW	2723 (Q723 GHG)	4830
Volvo B6-50/Alexander	2403-17 (L403/4 FVN, L405-8 GDC, L409-12 GPY, L413-7 KEF), 2418-33 (M418-25 PVN, M426-33 RDC)	8403-33
Volvo B10B/Alexander	2208-12 (L208-12 KEF)	4808-12
Bova Futura	2912 (ESK 912, <i>F770 DWR</i>)	7069
DAF MB230/Duple	9190 (FCU 190, <i>E907 MDC</i>), 9425 (425 BVK, 961 KVK, <i>E908 MDC</i>), 9701-4 (LSK 607, CU 7661, UGD 735, 574 CPT, <i>G701-4 AEF</i>), 9849 (SSU 849, <i>E910 MDC</i>), 9874 (YSU 874, <i>D902 EAJ</i>), 9703 (YSU 875, <i>D903 EAJ</i>), 9876/9 (YSU 876/82, <i>E906/9 MDC</i>), 9904/5 (JSK 254, <i>E1B 8955, D904/5 EAJ</i>)	5135/6/9-42/38/0/1/4/7/2/3
DAF SB3000/Van Hool	2802-5 (WOJ 802, 373 FGB, <i>F802/3 UEF</i> , TVE 804, <i>J804 TAJ</i> , 685 XHY, <i>K805 BHN</i>)	7070-3
Dennis Javelin/Duple	2163 (H163 DJU)	4767
Leyland Tiger/Duple	2902 (F902 JBB)	4766
Leyland Tiger/Plaxton	2524 (524 FUP, <i>F57 YCW</i>), 2822 (JCN 822, <i>E116 KFV</i>), 2961 (961 KVK, <i>425 BVK, G349 RTA</i>), 2962 (GSK 962, <i>C376 PCD</i>), 2982 (ESK 982, <i>E183 GRG</i> , <i>JSK 327, E131 CTN</i>), 9008 (XEF 8Y)	7047/38/45/56/31, 5143
Scania K93CRB/Plaxton	2023 (G23 UJR)	4829
Scania K112/Plaxton	2830 (CAZ 6830, <i>E330 MHN</i>)	7065
Scania K112/Van Hool	2832 (CAZ 6832, <i>E340 MHN</i>)	7066
Scania K113/Plaxton	2833/4 (CAZ 6833, <i>F30 UHN</i> , CAZ 6834, <i>F999 UEF</i>)	7067/8
Volvo B10M-61/Duple	2107 (E107 DJR)	4749
Volvo B10M-61/Plaxton	2831 (CAZ 6831, <i>D855 FRF</i> , <i>WHA 325, D814 SGB</i>)	7064
Volvo B10M-61/Van Hool	2527 (527 LPF, <i>D29 BEW</i>)	7063
Leyland Olympian/Northern Counties	9106-10 (F106/7 UEF, K108-10 YVN)	3806-10
Leyland Atlantean/Alexander	9152/5/65/75 (AVK 152V etc) 9269/84 (SCN 269/84S), 9611 (TSD 611S)	3793-6/91/2, 3682
Leyland Atlantean/ECW	9424/39/58 (RFR 424P, <i>MBR 439/58T</i>)	3681, 3539/58
Leyland Atlantean/MCW	9187/8/99, 9203 (VFT 187T etc), 9208/19/32 (YNL 208V etc)	3687/8/99, 3703/8/19/32
Leyland Atlantean/Northern Counties	9349 (XUP 349L)	3790
Leyland Atlantean/Roe	9356 (AUP 356W)	3456
MCW Metrobus	9489/91/4/5 (DVK 489W etc)	3489/91/4/5

DAF SB220/Optare Deltas 4806/7 (J206/7 VHN) are now transferred to Northern stock, 4801-5 (J201-5 VHN) moving across from Peterlee to Bishop Auckland. Volvo B6-50 8421 (M421 PVN) was the first to receive corporate livery and Go-OK Travel fleetnames, followed by Optare Delta 4805 (J205 VHN).

Now withdrawn are Leopards 9273 and 9306 (GLS 273S, GMS 306S). Latest disposals to record are Tigers 9009 (XEF 9Y), 9719 (A719 ABB), 9782 (WBB 348Y, 782 *UJO, CBF 2Y*) and Volvo B58-56 9965 (SPT 965V) all to North East Bus Breakers, Annfield Plain (dealer).

At the time of writing, none of the expected six ex-Bristol Leyland National 2s for the main fleet had arrived in exchange for the J-EPX-registered Iveco minis. More are expected afterwards from a second tranche of 13 Leyland National 2s to be withdrawn by Bristol.

Accident-damaged Bristol VRT/SL3 504 (RHT 504S) is reported to be rebuilt as a convertible open-topper.

The ex-Ministry of Defence Dodge G13/Wadham Stringer Vanguard B39F driver trainer 966 (D562 HPO, 80-KF-30) is to be joined by withdrawn Iveco 49.10 147 (H463 GTM), which has been in store at Hoeford prior to its planned new role as a driver trainer.

Reading Mainline

The latest ex-Blackpool AEC Routemaster to enter service is No.39 (583 CLT). By early October, Nos.40-44 (WLT 848/79, ALM 71, 89B, ALD 966B) were still unused. Ex-Strathtay No.12 (AST 415A, VLT 45) was not prepared for repaint and service by mid-October and No.21 (CUV 201C) is now in use as a temporary seat-store.

Nos.13, 27 and 28 (WTS 186, 102A, XSL 220A) and un-numbered 653 DYE are now in an advanced state of cannibalisation and will not be used for service. However, of the Strathtay vehicles acquired, Nos.11 and 14 (AST 416A, WLT 316) were smartly prepared by the company and have been in regular use ever since.

Nos.1 and 26 (ALM 34B, NRH 803A) are long-term delicensed. Former BTS refurbished RM No.32 (LDS 280A) remains delicensed after ticket expiry and is not repainted. Many of the earlier RMs are now due for a repaint in Reading Mainline's livery.

A shortage of drivers (acute in the Thames Valley and London areas and increasingly so elsewhere) has necessitated a reduction in service frequency Lines A, B (and X), as well as a reduced frequency off-peak on Line H.

Although a fare increase was recently instigated (in line with other operators locally), the weekly Reading Mainliner £5 rover-ticket remains unchanged.

Readers interested in transport operations in the Reading area are recommended to the illustrated magazine *Bus Fare*, published monthly by the British Trolleybus Society and kindly made available to Fleet News each month. Further details from the British Trolleybus Society, 2 Josephine Road, Southcote, Reading RG30 2DG.

Red & White ST

New are Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Interurban C51F 775/6-8-82 (R775 CDW etc), allocated to Brynmawr where they displaced Dennis Javelin Interurbans to Chepstow (in turn, ousting Leyland Tigers).

First of a number of ex-London Leyland Titans to arrive are TNLXB2RRSP/Leyland H44/27F NUW 619Y and OHV 719Y, both delivered in single-door form. NUW 619Y is now numbered 864.

Now withdrawn are Volvo-engined Leyland National 635 (WUH 168T), Alexander-bodied Bristol VRT/LL3 864 (OSR 208R) and Leyland Tiger coaches 899, 901/10/1/25 (AAX 451/66A, AAL 518/6A, AKG 197A, SDW 915/7/26/7Y, A225 VWO). Of these, 925 has rejoined sister 927 at Stagecoach Devon and 899, 901/10/1 have passed to a dealer. Leyland National 600 (XVV 540S), Tiger coach 934 (AKG 296A, A234 VWO) and Bristol VRT/SL3 NFB 114R have passed to scrap dealers after cannibalisation for spares, the VR only having been acquired (from Circle Line of Gloucester) for this purpose.

Red Arrow Express, Smethwick

In operation is Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander M386 KVR and Dodge S56/Dormobile B25F E63S DCK.

Rhondda

Mercedes-Benz L608D/Robin Hood B20F D164/83 VRP are on loan from MK Metro and have fleetnumbers 230, 220 allocated respectively — the same numbers as the temporary routes on which they are being used, due to bridge repairs at Gelli. 230 is now also in Rhondda livery.

Leyland Leopard 377 (PHN 570R) has been sold to South Lancs Transport.

Ribble ST

New are Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton C51F 108-10/2 (P108 DCW etc) and new for Blackburn are Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F 668-72 (R668-72 LFW).

Leyland Leopard PSU3C/3R/Alexander (Belfast) GSU 863T is now numbered T253 for use as a driver trainer.

Ex-Hyndburn Dennis Falcon Hs 950/1 (A50 LHG, B51 XFV) have been withdrawn and sold, to South Lancashire Transport.

Rossendale Transport

New arrivals are Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs B28F 111-3 (P211-3 DCK) based at Rochdale, whilst double-deck acquisitions are of Leyland Atlantean AN68D/1R/Northern Counties H43/32F A741/52 NNA from Stagecoach Manchester.

Meanwhile, 16 Carlyle Dartline-bodied Dennis Darts have been acquired from Metrolina as replacements for MCW Metroriders. First numbered are 8.5SDL3003/B28F 17, 18 and 21 (H117 MOB, H611/21 MOM), whilst H620 MOM, H104/12/4/9/24/7-9/31 MOB are also in stock.

Now withdrawn are Leyland Atlanteans 17, 18 and 131 (PTD 417S; TDK 546S (STE 18S); VDY 531T), all sold to dealers, 18 and 131 for scrap.

All bus operations are to be transferred from Rawtenstall to Rochdale, outside Rossendale, concentrating all work on its Mandale Park site.

Ryan, Llantwit Fardre

Now in stock are ex-Finglands Leyland Atlanteans LJA 611P and NRN 597P, joining ex-Greater Manchester VNB 157/73L, WBN 981L, XJA 515L and GDB 174N here. Also acquired is Volvo B10M/Van Hool C30Ft L543 YUS ex-National Holidays.

Atlantean HNB 40N (also ex-GM, but acquired via East Kent) is now derelict after accident damage.

A notable vehicle still running, but now for sale, is 1966 Leyland Titan PD2 FRJ 243D ex-Salford (and, naturally, GM!), now set aside after a period as a driver trainer.

Selkent ST

Now taken into stock from East London are Dennis Dart 9SDL3024/Plaxton Pointer B34F DRL110/7/8/23/7 (K110 SRH etc).

Dart DT28 (49 CLT) is now re-registered G28 TGW, DT32 (VLT 240) becoming G32 TGW and DT55 (WLT 575) becoming G55 TGW, the ex-Routemaster registrations being transferred to company cars and the Darts no doubt due for early withdrawal, as have been DT34/6/7 (G34 TGW etc). These have passed to East London. Optare MetroRider MRL146 (H146 UUA) is now with Fleetlink of Liverpool.

The Shires AA

New vehicles to record are Mercedes-Benz Vario O.810D/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F 2171-8 (R171-8 VBM), with four more due and Scania L113CRL/Northern Counties B49F 3191-5 (R191-5 RBM), also with another four due as 3201-5. 2171-4 were hurried into service on Harrow-Watford service 350 without fleetnames, fleetnumbers or indicator blinds, others appearing at Hemel Hempstead. 3191-5 are at Luton, route-branded as 'Sapphire' service 12. Further new vehicles due by the end of 1997 are 10 short-wheelbase Dennis Dart SLFs and 10 Plaxton-bodied DAF coaches replacing MKL Leyland Nationals, Metroriders and Iveco 49.10 minis. Of the reported 15 Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties Palatine II due for spring 1998 delivery, the initial six will be coach-seated for service 280 (Aylesbury-Oxford).

Rather different additions to stock are Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/31F 5866/74, 5912/3 (FKM 866/74V, BKE 856T, FKM 865V) from Maidstone & District, retaining their M&D fleetnumbers. From Guildford & West Surrey come Leyland National 2 NL106AL11/1R/B44F 3901 (LFR 876X) and Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R/Roe H43/30F 5910 (EPH 226V) and from London & Country main fleet stock comes AN68A/1R/Park Royal H43/30F 5911 (UPK 128S). Of these, only 5866/74 are expected to see service, the others, although unusually numbered, are for spares.

Leyland Atlanteans 5037/43 (JPE 237V, KPJ 243W) are significant repaints into blue/yellow livery, as the very last two vehicles still in National Bus green!

Further vehicles withdrawn are MCW Metroriders 2004/10/1/7/26 (E974/80/1/7/96 DNK, E484 CNM), Iveco 49.10s 2036/42/4/6/7 (E64 BVS, E342/4/6/7 DRO), Leyland Nationals 3008/16/20/3/9/30/2 (OVV 518R, BVV 542/7T, ERP 550T, MNH 579V, KRP 560V, MNH 572V) and Bristol VRT/SL3s 5027/31/48 (CBD 900T, RMA 431V, VVV 955W).

A further clearance of redundant withdrawn stock has seen Whiting Bros of Pontefract (dealer) taking 1996 (C219 EKJ), 2017/30/4-6 (E987 DNK, E731 DNM, E484 CNM, C305 SPL, E64 BVS), 3002/4/7/13/9/21/2/8 (KRP 563/6V, GNV 660N, UPB 328S, XNV 539S, YPL 405/36T, EPD 521V), 5002/12 (HBD 918T, GNV 334N), 5902-4/6-8/11 (ONF 655/80R, BKE 854T, URB 166S, PKM 107/10R, UPK 128S) whilst Houston Ramon of Sudden (dealer) has taken 2042/4/6/7 (E342 DRO etc).

Silcox, Pembroke Dock

The army of ex-MoD Leyland Tigers continue to be refurbished and placed in service. Latest are 91, 100 and 212 (E125/39/41 ODE), noted at work in Haverfordwest on schools contracts in mid-September and 99 (E138 ODE) on normal service in Camarthen/Haverfordwest at the same time. Similar D146 KDE has been outshopped in blue and cream rather than the usual red/cream and is without a fleetnumber.

Southampton Citybus FB

Leyland Lynxes 101/2 have returned to the main fleet from Hants & Sussex. Former Brewers Leyland National 2 AAE 653V entered service with Hants & Sussex on 23 October, with another due.

South London AA

Volvo Citybus B10M-50/East Lancs H45/31D VE648-61 (H648-61 GPF) are now in stock from Londonlinks.

Springfield Coachways, Wigan

New are Optare Excels R642/3 MBV, at work on 'Wigan Challenge' service 630 (Wigan-Billinge-Platt Bridge).

Stagecoach Manchester ST

Substantial deliveries of new vehicles are under way, but all are single-deck in this traditionally strong double-deck fleet. New Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F are 530-54/6-66 (P530 PNE etc) based at Stockport, Charles Street (530-45), Glossop (546-53) and Hyde Road (554/6-9/61-6). The Varios appear to be ousting the last Metroriders.

Acquisitions for driver training are Leyland Leopard PSU3E/3R/Alexander B53F TV07 (GSU 859T) from Graham, Perth; Bristol LH6L/ECW B43F TV09 (VDV 105S) and TV10 (REU 316S) ex-Teeside, of which TV07 and TV09 are at Princess Road. LH GLJ 490N is ex-Wood of Craven Arms and is now numbered TV08 and at Princess Road, YAE 516V became TV11, was ex-Teeside and is at Hyde Road.

Now withdrawn are Metroriders 1636/43/4/7/50/62 (D636/43/4/7/50 MDB, D662 NNE) and Leyland Atlanteans 4348 (MNC 548W), 4404 (MRJ 404W), 4505/26/37/45/6/52/77/86 (SND 505/26X, ANA 537/45/6/52/77/86Y), 4600/1/31/2/98 (ANA 600/1/31/2Y, A698 HNB).

The company has donated 1984 Northern Counties-bodied 4706 (A706 LNC) to the Manchester Museum of Transport.



Group codes

AA	Arriva (formerly Cowie Group)
BL	Blazefield Holdings
EY	EYMS Group
FB	First Bus
GA	Go-Ahead Group
MT	MTL Holdings
NX	National Express
ST	Stagecoach Holdings
YT	Yorkshire Traction

The last Leyland Atlantean bought new by Ribble was withdrawn in August. ECW-bodied 1481 (TRN 481V), one of the last in service, pauses at Abbey Village, before returning to Chorley. JOHN YOUNG

As with Greater Manchester, the surplus Atlanteans are proving popular buys, with 4314 (MNC 514W) going to Abbots of Leeming; 4348 (MNC 548W) to Reilly of Maghull; 4449/54, 4577, 4600/98 (SND 449/54X, ANA 577, 600Y, A698 HNB) to Merseypride; 4546, 4601/32 (ANA 546Y etc) to Lister, Bolton (dealer); 4538/43/64/72, 4637 and 4710 (ANA 538/43/64/72, 637Y, A710 LNC) to Finglands; 4568/9/96, 4700/2, 7953 (ANA 568/9/96Y, A700 HNB, A702 LNC, BNC 953T) to North Birmingham Busways; 4741/52 (A741/52 NNA) to Rossendale; 4614/27/61/4/5/74/87, 4714 (ANA 614/27Y, A661/4/5/74/87 HNB, A714 LNC) to Appleby's of Conisholme; 4404, 4521/7, 4646 (MRJ 404W, SND 521/7X, ANA 636Y) to Wallasey of London. Lone Metrorider 1634 (D634 MDB) has gone to Alexander of Eythorne.

Another new Magicbus service is now in operation along the Wilmslow Road corridor and is 141 (Manchester City Centre-Owens Park).

Stagecoach South Group ST

Further Leyland Titan TNLXB2RR/Leyland H44/27F acquired from East London are 7204/7-9/14/21/4/31/5/43/59/63/70/2 (OHV 744, 697/88, 769/84/61/24/31, 645, 743/59, 663Y, NUW 670/2Y). Of these, 7208/24/35/70 have gone on loan straight to Cambus (qv). Of the 20 due, examples are expected into Sussex Coastline at Portsmouth and East Kent at Herne Bay, all in Stagecoach livery apart from those with Cambus which are red.

Bristol VRT/SL3s dispensed with are South Coast Buses 768 (AAP 668T) to Kent Bus & Coach Co (dealer), Five Oak Green, Hampshire Bus 7352 (JWV 252W) to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer) and 7356 (JWV 256W) to John Pike Coaches of Andover.

The body of fire-damaged Dennis Dart 525 (J525 GCD) was scrapped by recently, the chassis being dismantled for spares although it apparently remains officially still in stock as 'delicensed'.

Leyland National 1180 (UMO 180N) is now allocated to the Paint Float Pool.

Stuarts, Dukinfield

Operations have now virtually ceased. Leyland Atlantean JKW 316W has passed to Wigley, Carlton (dealer), sisters JKW 310/22/35W having also been sold along with Leyland Fleetline SDA 613S and Ikarus-bodied DAFs K123/4 TCP.

Thames Transit ST

Following Stagecoach takeover, new double-deckers have been allocated to Oxford-Witney service 100, the first two noted being Volvo Olympians R501/3 UWL. Volvo B10M-55 saloons, and further new Olympians, are expected to replace all remaining minis — some of which are due to migrate to Devon.

A further development was the appearance of articulated Volvo B10M N561 SJF on loan from Fife Scottish for use on the Oxford-London service. However it could not use Gloucester Green bus station and had to operate from George Street nearby, with passengers being 'walked' out to it!

Thamesway FB

Double-deckers have re-appeared at Hadleigh for the first time in many years. First came Thamesway's last Bristol VR, a very tired-looking 3113 (XHK 218X). Next have come Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/31F 3225/34 (AYG 850S, NUM 339V) from Eastern National, both retaining full EN colours but with Thamesway fleetnames. Leyland Olympian 4004 (B699 BPU) had to be temporarily drafted in shortly afterwards to cover for 3225.

Now withdrawn and transferred to Eastern Counties is the one-off Show-exhibit Volvo B6/Northern Counties 1601 (L601 MWC).

Tillingbourne, Cranleigh

Mercedes-Benz L608D/Whittaker 688 (B206 EKY) is re-registered MIL 4688 and Bedford YMT/Plaxton Derwent 689 (D603 RGJ) is now MIL 4689. The latter has now lost its bus seats and has gained coach seats (with three-point seatbelts) for use on school contracts etc. Two similar sisters are to follow, probably 694 (D694 WAU) and 216 (E216 MFX).

Now withdrawn are Iveco 49.10/Robin Hood 425 (D425 XPJ), broken for spares and scrapped; Mercedes-Benz 811D/Dormobile 427 (H427 KPA) sold to Bob Vale PSV Sales (dealer) and now with A-Line of Bedworth, Warwick; Volvo B10M/Duple bus 827 (FGD 827X) sold to Dunn-Line of Nottingham and due to be rebodied as a double-decker, and lastly Dennis Dorchester 943 (FOD 943Y), disposed of to Tate of Markyate, Herts.

Timeline, Leigh

First of nine Optare Excel L1070/B38F due are 214-6 (R214-6 SBA), for use at Bolton. Leyland Tigers 59 and 61 (G59, 61 RND) have been withdrawn and sold to Carlton, Hellaby.

Top Deck, Horsell Common

The final Top Deck Deckerhome overland adventure holiday departure was due to have been made in September by ex-Southern Vectis Bristol Lodekka LD6G PDL 519, *Tadpoles*.

Travel West Midlands NX

In addition to the 100 Mercedes-Benz O.405Ns, current orders call for 30 Optare Solos and a further 70 Wright Crusader-bodied Volvo B6Les.

The last five Leyland Fleetlines were withdrawn on 1 November. The last one into the depot (Washwood Heath) was numerically the last of all, MCW H43/33F-bodied 7000 (WDA 700T), which has been donated to the Aston Manor Transport Museum. Thus ended 37 years of Fleetline operation by this operator and its predecessors, which between them have run nearly 2,000 of the type. The other four still running on 1 November were 6477 (NOC 477R), 6898 (TVP 898S) and 6932/52 (WDA 932/52T).

The first low-floor Optare Spectra appeared at Coach & Bus '97 registered R1 NEG. The George is now destined for Travel Dundee.

Universal Buses, Walsden

This new operator on the Manchester scene primarily operates school contracts in the Stockport area from a base in Rochdale using new Dennis Dart SLF/UVG B31F R807-11 WJA. Optare Excel demonstrator N330 EUG was in use during September.

Universitybus, Hatfield

New are 10.8m Dennis Dart SLF/Wright Crusader B41F R649-51 VBM with three more due. Leyland National OOX 816R has been withdrawn and sold, the last of its type in service being THX 204S along with Greenway THX 261S.

Village Tours, Speke

Another ex-Oxford/London Leyland Titan is V51 (KYV 524X), the batch being used to replace all remaining Leyland Fleetlines. Already withdrawn are ex-Derby Fleetlines V11, 15 and 17 (XRR 295S, RCH 288R, XRR 294S).

Viscount Bus & Coach ST

As with Cambus, repaints into Stagecoach Corporate stripes continue apace, such that the last few vehicles left in Viscount livery are Olympians 508/11, Bristol VRs 770/3/9/80/2/4/8-90/91 and Iveco 956.

Olympian 503 (UWW 3X) has been on loan to Cambus briefly.

'Heritage' 1966 Bristol Lodekka FLF6G 450 (JAH 553D) remains on company stock and, like its open-top Premier twin 552 (JAH 552D), was in Reserve status, and last noted at March depot in August.

AEC Reliance driver trainer SFL 373R (49 CNG, NEB 348R) has been appearing at Cowley Road quite frequently and is not PCV licensed as is Cambus's Bristol LH trainer (qv).

Walls, Northenden

New are DAF DE02LTSB220/Ikarus Citibus 480 B48F R10, 11 WAL. The bodywork is slightly revised, with deeper indicator display and revised rear bootlid without ventilation grilles.

Whippet, Fenstanton

The latest Leyland Titan into stock here is ex-Oxford KYN 300X. However, although this type is still being introduced, Scania-MCW Metropolitan WKH 424S has recently been sent to Yeates of Loughborough for refurbishment.

Glyn Williams, Crosskeys

A further pair of new Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/UVG CitiStar B31F are 6 and 15 (R716/7 TRV), the previous 6, 15 (L920 UGA, K97 RGA) being withdrawn and sold to Anslow of Pontypool.

Dennis Dart SLF/UVG B38F demonstrator P423 BPP has been on loan during August and September.



Yorkshire Bus Group AA

New are Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F 758-70 (R758-70 DUB), of which 758-62 are with Selby & District, 763/5/6 with West Riding at Belle Isle.

New DAF DE33WSSB3000/Van Hool 31 (P31 XUG) is in National Express Flightlink black, cream and red livery.

Inter-company transfers see Yorkshire Woollen Leyland Lynxes 325-7 move to South Yorkshire at Pontefract, 326/7 entering traffic in cream/red; Woollen Leyland Olympian 523 is now with West Riding, 603 moving the opposite way. Woollen Mercedes-Benz 780 has been on loan to West Riding at Cestleford.

58 has returned to Roadlease, whence it came. Now sold are West Riding Leyland Nationals 101-4/6/8/10/7/9 and Yorkshire Woollen 125-8 to North East Bus Group; Yorkshire Woollen Leyland Nationals 135/7/9/43 to North Western and South Yorkshire Leyland Olympian 506 to Crosville Cymru.

Yorkshire Rider Group FB

The Volvo B6s that were due to have been 3007-18 have been diverted to Greater Glasgow in all-over red as P807-18 YUM. Deliveries here are Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B35F 3306-23 (P819 YUM, P889/90 TCV, P822-36 YUM); 3306-8 were delivered to Western National and arrived in Leeds with electronic indicator displays programmed for Western National services a month or so later. 3306 was not used, but 3307/8 did enter traffic in Plymouth for about four weeks. 3306/7 are now with Quickstep and are first to feature the new FirstBus corporate interior, 3308 being unallocated, 3309/11-5 are with Leeds City Link at Bramley, 3310 being on loan to another FirstBus company, 3316-8 with LCL at Kirkstall and 3319-23 are allocated on loan to Rider York.

The first new double-deckers for Leeds since 1991 are now in stock as brand new Volvo Olympian/Alexander Royale H43/29F 5607-9 (R607-9 JUB), also with FirstBus Corporate Interiors. They are the first of 26. Optare Excel L1150/B42F demonstrator P447 SWX has been on loan to Leeds City Link at Cherry Row. Greater Glasgow Volvo Olympian/Alexander VO141 (R141 EHS) and Scania/Wright P113 YSH have called by whilst on a national demonstration tour.

Further Leyland Atlanteans from Greater Manchester are AN68A/1R/Northern Counties H43/32F 6443-50 (QRJ 383/80-90W, SND 424X, MNC 505/15/6W), all with Kingfisher Huddersfield, whilst SND 434X has appeared at Leeds City Link's Kirkstall base. First of a batch of Atlanteans due for Bradford Traveller is AN68D/1R/Northern Counties H43/32F A737 ANA, also from Greater Manchester.

An inter-company transfer is of Scania N113DRB 8605 (K605 HUG) to Quickstep from Kirkstall. Leyland Fleetline 7033 (MNV 33P) and tree-topper 9339 are now both converted for use as driver trainers.

Now withdrawn are Leeds City Link Atlanteans 6132/3/40/6/69 (SUA 132/3/40/6R, WNW 169S) but, 6132/3 are now reinstated for further service. Also withdrawn are Leyland Fleetline 7033 (MNV 33P) and Dennis Dart 3201 (M201 VWW). Bradford has withdrawn Atlanteans 6033/73 (GUG 560N, HWT 59N) and the last two Leyland Tigers, 1621/2 (F621/2 XWY); Calderline has retired Leyland Fleetlines 7078 (JUM 78V) and 7109/26 (WUM 109S, CWU 136T) and Kingfisher has withdrawn Darts 3202/3 (M202/3 VWW). Reinstated Leyland National 2 1367 (MHJ 723V) is based with Calderline at Halifax, 6132/3 being back at Cherry Row.

Disposals are of Tigers 1621/2 to Brewers (joining 1615/7), but diverted on loan to SMT at Bathgate; Darts 3201-3 have gone to Eastern Counties, for which Darts have been 'requisitioned' from other FirstBus fleets; late-lasting Freight Rover Sherpas 1796 and 1869 (D796 KWR, D869 LWR); Leyland Atlantean 6050 (HWT 36N); Leyland Fleetlines 7054 and 7120 (RWU 54R, WUM 120S) along with Calderline's Daimler Fleetline YNA 300M bought for spares and Kingfisher's Atlantean ANC 911T similarly — have all passed to PVS, Carlton (dealer). Fleetline 7153 (CWU 153T) has gone to the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service for use in training, now with most of its roof removed — it was due to be scrapped.

Yorkshire Terrier YT

The first of five low-floor Spryte-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs was in build at East Lancs for September delivery.

Yorkshire Traction YT

Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs Spryte B37F demonstrator P718 WFR is confirmed in stock, numbered 441. It wears fleet livery with Easy Link fleetnames and route-branding for services 343/344 (Barnsley-Hospital/Pogmoor). Delivered new is twin 442 (R442 THL), route-branded for services 343/344 also.

Your Bus, Alcester NX

New are low-floor DAF SB220LC550/Plaxton 35/6 (R396/7 XDA), with new corporate Travel Your Bus logos in white on orange background.

Leyland National BVP 761V similarly wears the new logo and vinyls are being applied to other vehicles.

ISLE OF MAN

Isle of Man Transport

To cover for withdrawn Leyland Nationals, unexpected arrivals are six Leyland Lynxes. The first pair to arrive were LX112L10ZR1/B51F 89, 90 (MAN 89, 90F), former Halton Transport 8, 9 (F687 YWM, F81 STB), which are to be refurbished with high-backed seating. Due in September were 91-93 (MAN 91-93F), formerly Halton F520/1 AEM, F895 BKF and the last is due in October as 94 (MAN 94F), an LX2R11C15Z4R/B51F, to be one of the Halton pair 17 or 26 (G221/2 DKA).

At mid-September, just one of the Marshall-bodied Dennis Darts was in stock — SFD322/Marshall C39 B37F 20 (DMN 20R), but three were noted at Heysham ready for shipment, eight to follow in week commencing 22 September and a further eight the week after. The first of these duly arrived as 16-19, 21-24 (DMN 16R etc) and have gone straight into store, following open storage at Marshalls prior to shipment.

They wear a new livery of red and cream with 'Coca-Cola'-style flash along lower panels, together with black doors and wheels, with 'Easyrider' branding. The full batch will continue with 25-40 (DMN 25-40R).

Now withdrawn are Leyland Nationals 20, 24, 26 and 31 (MAN 20D, MAN 24, 26H, MAN 31N), leaving 25 (MAN 25H) as the last vehicle purchased new by the Isle of Man Road Services to be left in service. 20 and 27 were placed in store at Port Erin station, but suffered vandalism and were moved again to Ronaldsway Airport for greater security. 31 appearing there later. 21 and 23 (MAN 21, 23H) have now been scrapped at Balthane. 27 (MAN 27H) is also still extant and historically significant as the last IoMRS vehicle bought new. 24 (MAN 24H) is now owned by Ronaldsway Airport as its No3, now fitted with obligatory orange roof light for airside use, replacing early ex-Southdown Leyland National 2 (BCD 802L). 26 is now a temporary waiting room for passengers at Derby Castle.

Group codes

AA	— Arriva (formerly Cowie Group)
BL	— Blazefield Holdings
EY	— EYMS Group
FB	— First Bus
GA	— Go-Ahead Group
MT	— MTL Holdings
NX	— National Express
ST	— Stagecoach Holdings
YT	— Yorkshire Traction

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Opposite and left Thames Transit is now trading as Stagecoach Oxford. First deliveries in corporate livery are 13 Alexander-bodied Volvo Olympians for use on route 100 to Winney. Seen here in Worcester Street is 505 (R505 UWL). Also in Worcester Street is R64 UFC, a new version of the Blackbird-bodied Dennis Dart, in a new version of the Blackbird Flyer scheme.

PHILIP LAMB

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Forthcoming Events

29th/30th November 1997 - A Christmas Cracker

All aboard for a cracker of a day out at our pre-Christmas festival. Get transport-type presents, take a ride on a vintage bus and have a look at the entertainment laid on. It's a perfect way to round off the season. Details: G. Tunbull.

21st/22nd March 1998 - Spring Festival

Collector's heaven is here at one of the biggest transport collectors fairs in the North. Whether it's a photo of your favourite school bus, now long since sent to the scrap heap, that extra book for bedtime reading, or even a spare part for your classic bus, this is the event to start off the year. Details: G. Turnbull. Visit our Museum and see the large selection of books and models available. If you would like to join an active and social society please contact our Membership Office - Mr J. Harrison for an introductory pack.

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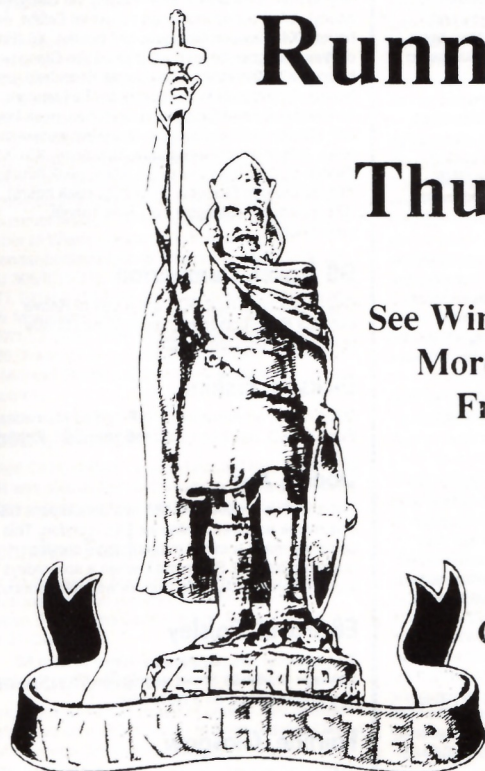
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King Alfred Running Day, Winchester IAN ALLAN Publishing 1 January 1998 - travel in style with Buses.

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All timings, dates, prices and information are correct at the time of going to press, but the publisher reserves the right to make changes or to cancel the trip due to insufficient numbers as necessary.

Reports to be sent, please, to Sandy Macdonald, 12 Morton Gardens, Maxwell Park, Glasgow G41 4AF, to reach him by 12 December for the February issue.

Allander, Milngavie

Further fleet numbers reported are AT03 (CBZ 4622, YFJ 67X, UTC 872, OHE 268X), AT13 (N813 NHS) and AT15 (9446 AT). Alexander-bodied Ailsa B55 LHS 748V is now owned by Allison, Dunfermline.

Avondale, Greenock

Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D HSK 177 (F300 RMH) reverted to its original registration shortly after purchase in August.

Bluebird Buses ST

469/70 (NIB 5232/3, B47/8 DWE) are Plaxton C51F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RHs transferred to this fleet in September from Western Buses, where they were numbered 163/4. Three other vehicles obtained on loan from the same source are 226 (WDZ 6951, D136 NUS), 227 (RBZ 5497, D107 NUS) and 228 (RBZ 4241, D46 UAO) — Mercedes-Benz L608Ds with Alexander or Reeve Burgess (228) bodywork, which were previously 226/07, 046 in the Western fleet. 226/7 have been allocated to Elgin and Inverurie respectively.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Tigers 442/7/8/57 were repainted around July with horizontal stripes rather than the usual stripes swept up at the rear.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Tiger 457 (B291 YSL, GSU 343, B209 FFS) has been written off. Further to the November issue, parts of the dismembered corpse of Duple Laser-bodied Leyland Tiger 462 (AKG 232A, A229 VWO) were located in August near Huntly. The engine was buried in a field while the axles and other parts were hidden in bales of hay, but the rest of the chassis and the entire body have still to be found. Four persons have been arrested in connection with the matter.

Boyce, Milton of Campsie

John Boyce, better known as one of the operators who for some time has shared the former Duncan Stewart premises at Dalmuir, has registered a two-hourly Monday to Saturday service between Glasgow (Buchanan bus station) and Kirkintilloch (Harestanes), due to commence on 23 October.

Bridge, Paisley

Carlyle-bodied Freight Rover Sherpas D67/8 CLV passed to Ward, Caerleon in April.

Bulldog, Whitburn

The West Lothian Council contracts for operating various services in Livingston (404/405/406/407/489) were given up in early October, although other contracted (Whitburn Wanderer; 431, Livingston-Blackridge, Sundays) and commercial (B8, Livingston-Whitburn; B10, Fauldhouse-Bathgate; 301, Livingston-Deans; 302, Livingston-Carmondean) services are being continued.

Carlton, Glasgow

Allan Thomson of Knightswood, Glasgow, trading as Carlton Coach Travel, was due to commence local service operation on 10 November with a half-hourly Monday to Saturday route between High Knightswood and Clydebank, numbered 29.

Cityliner, Port Glasgow

Express service X596 between Glasgow and Greenock was cancelled with effect from 31 October.

Clyde Coast, Ardrossan

Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard CSF 163W was on loan to this company from Western Buses during May and June, and has been followed by similar TSJ 67S in September. They are numbered 632/67 by their owner.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard OSJ 628R and Ailsa D6 (UCS 896S) have been repainted into the two-tone blue livery, but similar Ailsa D1 (JOV 744P) has been scrapped.

Clydeside AA

210-14 (H712/3/04/2/3 UNW) are further 1991 Optare MetroRider MR09s with Optare B23F bodywork acquired in September from West Riding, where they were numbered 712/3/04/2/3. All have been repainted into full fleet livery and allocated to Johnstone depot. Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 233/6, Alexander-bodied Renault S56s 323/30/7/50 and Reeve Burgess-bodied Renault S56 365 have been repainted into the lemon F&L livery and renumbered 23/4, 13-6/8 respectively.

Rootes-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D 20 was renumbered 236 in September, repainted into GMS green and white in lieu of F&L lemon, and allocated to Greenock depot. Similar Reeves Burgess-bodied 232/5/7 have also been fully repainted into GMS colours while 234 now carries a white-based overall advertisement for the Oak Mall Shopping Centre in addition to its green and white GMS front.

Leyland Olympian 896 has been given a mainly yellow overall advertising livery for St Ivel Utterly Butterly, the treatment including its front and with contrivance on the windows. Further Dennis Darts to lose their Clydeside fleet names in favour of branding for specific routes are 833/5-7 for Gallowhill Supershuttle service 68, and 838/9 for Flagship Renfrewshire.

Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D 12 has been re-registered from D650 CVN to LAZ 5765, and Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard 766 is now registered WDS 234V ex-GCS 66V.

Made to Measure-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D 249 (H902 GNC) was sold to a dealer earlier this year after sustaining severe accident damage, and Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard 771 (MFR 305P) has also gone to a dealer. Further vehicles which were sold to Lough Swilly in September comprised Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tigers 176 (A879 ASJ, 32 CLT, A806 WSU, VCS 376, A175 UGB), 177 (WLT 974, A177 UGB), 179 (54 CLT, A179 UGB), 180 (A848 ASJ, VLT 234, A180 UGB) and Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopards 651 (TSJ 51S), 703 (BSJ 903T), 764 (GCS 64V).

Alexander-bodied Renault S56 326 (E326 WYS) is now with McNairn, Coatbridge.

Dart, Paisley

MAN 11.190 P190 SHR has been repainted from Thamesdown Transport colours into fleet livery and numbered A41. Mercedes-Benz minibuses 554/45/6 (D554/45/6 RCK) were renumbered M54-6 in August. Leyland Tiger coaches ONL 953X (LFT 1X), LFT 3, 4X have been re-registered VJI 6961-3 respectively.

More Leyland Nationals have been re-registered and given fleet numbers and are now N11 (NIL 5363, NRD 145M), N12 (NIL 5364, VKU 77S), N13 (NIL 5365, ABA 25T), N14 (NIL 5366, VKU 79S), N15 (NIL 5367, LPF 602P), N16 (NIL 5368, RBU 180R), N18 (NIL 5370, GOL 398N), and N24 (NIL 5373, THX 179S). Similar WGY 594S and LDW 362P have been re-registered NIL 5369/71, while YXI 2465, JTH 765P, TRN 806V and AHH 209T have been allocated fleet numbers N10, 20/8, 31, N29 and N30 (NIL 7242/3) were previously registered TRN 812V and AHH 206T respectively, and not the other way round as previously reported.

It should be noted that N28 and N31 have not been prepared for service and are unlikely to be used. Early casualties amongst the Nationals are N15 and N24 which had both been withdrawn by September.

Other than those mentioned above and M53, all Mercedes-Benz L608D minibuses had been withdrawn from service by June, with many subsequently sold to other operators or to a dealer in Dublin.

As anticipated, service revisions were implemented in July as a result of the Cowie Group taking a financial interest in the company, with Dart vehicles taking over certain services from both Clydeside and the former Argyll Bus & Coach operation. The revised operation comprises 1 (Greenock-Glasgow Airport via Paisley, hourly), 2 (Quarriers Village/Bridge of Weir-Paisley, half hourly), 3 (Bridge of Weir-Paisley via Georgetown, hourly), 3A (Paisley-Inchinnan Industrial Estate, peak hours), X4 (Linwood-Glasgow, half hourly), X5 (Bridge of Weir-Glasgow, hourly), X6 (Kilmacolm-Glasgow, hourly), X7 (Kilmacolm-Glasgow via Brookfield, peak hours), 8 (Bridge of Weir-Hawhead, half hourly), X41/X42 (Linwood-Glasgow Universities, peak hours), X45 (Bridge of Weir-Glasgow, late night weekends only), X46 (Kilmacolm-Glasgow, Sundays), X51/X52 (Bridge of Weir-Glasgow Universities, peak hours), X61 (Kilmacolm-Glasgow University, peak hours), and X71 (Kilmacolm-Glasgow via Clyde Tunnel, peak hours).

DB Travel, Dumbarton

C421 VVN and D552 RCK are a pair of Reeve Burgess B20F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608Ds purchased from Dart, Paisley.

Dickson, Erskine

D508 NWG, an Alexander B20F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D, has been acquired from Dart, Paisley.

Dodds, Ayr

H403 ERP is an MAN 10-180 with Jonckheere C34FT coachwork acquired in May ex-Ellis, London. This company made a minor return to local service operation from 22 September, when a schooldays only journey between Ayr and Dunure was reintroduced.

EB Travel, Paisley

This operator has registered a 10min service 68 between Smithills Street and Gallowhill in Paisley, due to commence on 3 November.

Fairline, Glasgow

PMT C33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D H875 NFS is now owned by Thurlby, Aldershot.

Fife Scottish ST

New arrivals in September comprised 539/41-3 (R539/41-3 RSF), Plaxton C51F-bodied Volvo B10M-62s allocated to Glenrothes, St Andrews, Kirkcaldy, and Dunfermline respectively. Other additions at the same time were 756/77/87 (NUW 566/77/87Y), Leyland Titan TNLXB2RRs with Leyland H44/24D bodywork previously numbered T566/77/87 in the East London fleet. All three entered service in October from Aberhill depot.

Alexander C47F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2RH 445 (MSU 445, B211 FFS) was withdrawn in September with accident damage. Another accident victim, Alexander-bodied Ailsa 852 (OSC 52V), was sold to Gray (dealer), Kirkcaldy in September for scrap. Other vehicles sold at that time to PVS (dealer), Carlton comprised ECW-bodied Bristol VRTs 1111 (VTV 167S), 1113 (VPR 487S), 1114 (XAP 643S), 1117 (RTH 924S), 1129 (WHH 415S) and Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean 1161 (SCN 261S).

First Stop, Renfrew

G133 AHP, G213 AHP and G640 BHP are B22F-bodied Talbot Pullmans joining this fleet, having previously been with Ashton, Port Glasgow. From 13 October, a new 20min Monday to Saturday service 282 was introduced between Govan Cross and Penilee.



Transferred from Clydeside to the recently acquired McGills fleet is G198 NWY. The Reeve-Burgess-bodied Renault S56 was once with Yorkshire Rider. THOMAS BRYCELAND

Galson, Barvas

Ford Transits GS28 (G900 GWN) and GS35 (F291 PAC) are now in the new yellow and cream livery. Drivers have recently started to wear company uniforms.

GCT FB

With the apparently imminent virtual demise of this company, Dennis Darts MD5.6, Leyland Olympians GLO3-5, 41, MCW Metroriders GM45/51/5/6, 64, 74, and Volvo B6s MV11-6/21-8 have been transferred to Greater Glasgow while MCW Metrorider GM52 has been renumbered MM52 and transferred to Kelvin.

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-60 coaches CV1, 2 (H946/7 DRJ) were returned to Yeates (dealer), Loughborough in October after their spell on loan for the summer season. Vehicles sold by the beginning of October to Wigley (dealer), Carlton comprised Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans GLA26/8/9, 30 (VCU 305/8/11/3T), GLA35 (SCN 272S), GLA36 (UVK 293T), GLA52 (TGE 831R), LA664 (HGD 870L); and MCW Metroriders GM16 (E201 BNS), GM21, 38, 76 (E307/14/2 YDS). Similar GM1 (E995 WNS) and GM36 (E948 XYS) have been transferred to Lowland and Midland Bluebird respectively, presumably for spares.

Gibson, Moffat

Plaxton C47F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R SFJ 151R was sold in April to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall, but has subsequently passed to Marbill, Beith.

Glennifer, Paisley

After an apparently brief absence from local service operations, this firm registered a 20min service between Foxbar and Central Road, Paisley with effect from 21 October.

Goosecroft, Denny

Previously recorded as based in Stirling, this operator commenced an hourly Monday to Friday Stirling/Denny circular service 139 from 6 October.

Gordon, Leslie

Two services introduced on 20/21 August, presumably subsidised, are H1 (Dunfermline bus station-Stratheden Hospital — two journeys on Wednesdays and Sundays) and M3 (Blairhall/High Valleyfield/Cairneyhill — ten journeys on Tuesdays and Thursdays).

Grampian FB

045 (K67 HAS) and 046 (L538 XUT) are a pair of Caetano C18F-bodied Toyotas for the coach fleet. 045 is type HDB30R and 046 is an HZB50R. They were formerly numbered 737/8 in the Mairs Coaches fleet, and retain that operator's gold livery with red and maroon stripes in GRT style.

Another vehicle transferred from Mairs is 728 (HSO 61N) — an Alexander AY C45F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU4/4R. It was new to Grampian as number 61 in 1975 — the first new vehicle delivered to the fleet following the local government reorganisation, which resulted in the demise of Aberdeen Corporation. It is now to be restored to the cream, green and orange livery of that era in time for the centenary celebrations in 1998. It is also the intention to repaint four vehicles into traditional liveries by January, and a rally is to be held around 22 August, with other FirstBus companies lending their preserved vehicles for the occasion.

Mercedes-Benz O.405G 001 returned from Leicester Citybus in September, with Optare Prisma 028 (M504 GRV) going back to Leicester in exchange. 001 was sent immediately to Fleet Finish, Forfar for a full repaint, its green stripes having been painted red whilst in Leicester. Other recent repaints into the current livery include Leyland Atlanteans 339/41.

Leyland Atlanteans 283/9 (HSO 283/9V) have been sold for scrap to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall.

A new late night service to Garthdee commenced in October. It starts from Aberdeen Beach serving a new nightclub recently opened there. Other late night services are being re-routed to serve it as well. Grampian has obtained a contract to provide buses between this club, the city centre and the University Halls from 10.00 to 02.00hrs using Optare Prismas.

Gray, Clackmannan

From 13 October, this company has operated subsidised, non-schoolday Monday to Friday journeys between Killin and Callander.

Greater Glasgow FB

SS22-9 (R122-9 GSF) are further Wright-bodied Scania L113CRLs to enter service from Parkhead depot (SS22-5) or Larkfield depot (SS26-9). The long awaited Northern Counties-bodied Volvo B10BLE arrived in October as SV563 (R756 DYS) and is badged as Plaxton. It also has been allocated to Larkfield depot. This bus was due in July and was to have been registered P774 XHS. Further new arrivals in October were the equally long awaited Northern Counties Palatine II H43/29F-bodied Volvo Olympians, the first of which to be reported in service were VO154-6 (R654-6 DUS), allocated to Larkfield depot.

Bristol City Line 8880 (M880 ATC), a Volvo B6 with Plaxton Pointer B35F bodywork, arrived on loan on 9 October after a spell with Kelvin at Cumbernauld depot. It has been allocated fleet number MV49, and was being used on various services from Possilpark depot. Another loan at Possilpark from the same date was MV50 (P101 NDT), also a Plaxton Pointer-bodied Volvo, but presumably a B6LE. It was noted during October on service 89/90. With the arrival of new Volvo SV563, P452 BPH, the Northern Counties Paladin-bodied Dennis Lance demonstrator erroneously numbered SV563 for its stay in this fleet, was returned to its owner in mid-October. Optare Excel B32F demonstrator MO1 (P446 SWX) had also gone by mid-October.

Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz minibuses F618/34 XMS have been given what appear to be the incorrect fleetnumbers MA141/35, rather than the other way round, and were still carrying these numbers in October. More examples of this type which entered service from Larkfield depot during September were MA151/4/9.

Dennis Darts MD5, 6, Leyland Olympians GLO3-5, 41, MCW Metroriders GM45, 51/5/6, 64, 7 and Volvo B6s MV11-6, 21-8 have been transferred to this company from GCT, with GLO3-5, 41 being numbered LO3-5, 41 now as a result. Dennis Darts MD22-4/6-8 have been transferred from Kelvin to this fleet. Amongst the various Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans from this fleet which have been used by Kelvin for varying periods during the past year have been LA1192, 1234/52/61/2/7/91-5.

More vehicles to appear in the all-over red livery include Volvo Citybuses AH71, 93, Leyland Olympians LO18, 51, 74, 81/7, 98, LOC105, MCW Metrobus MB37 and Volvo Olympians VO83, 97.

Former Grampian Leyland Atlanteans LA1450-3 have been converted from H45/29D to single door layout, although the new seating figure is not yet known.

Leyland National driver trainers SN11/3/7, 30 were taken out of use in August and placed in storage. Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans LA1396/9, 1400/2/3 have been used for this purpose recently, LA1396 having been smartly repainted all-over red with a broad yellow band between decks with LA1399 being all-over red.

A very large number of buses has been sold recently to Wigley (dealer), Carlton comprising Duple-bodied Leyland Leopards C12 (OGD 660V), Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans LA1052 (RUS 303R), LA1125/7/9/30/4 (TGG 740/2/4/5/9R), LA1175/7/9 (UGG 394/6/8R), LA1192 (WUS 570S), LA1216/30/2/5/6/43-9 (XUS 587, 601/3/6/7/14-20S), LA1254/6/8/64/8/70/2- 5/7/8/80/1/4/7/9/90/92, 1300/1/9/10 (FSU 71/3/5, 81/5/7/9-2/4/5/7/8, 101/4/6/7/9/17/8/26/7T), LA1312/20/1/3/4/6/9/32/8/9/44/6-8/50 (LSU 369/77/8/80/1/3/6/9/95/6, 401/3-5/7V), LA1353/7/8/63/70/3/4/7 (RDS 567/71/2/42/9/52/3/6W) and MCW-bodied MCW Metrobuses MB1-5 (GGA 750-4T). It should be noted that, due to the amount of vehicle transfers between Kelvin, GCT and this fleet, some of these vehicles may have been used last by one of the other two companies. Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans LA1261/97 (FSU 78,114T) and LA1322/4 (LSU 379/81V) were sold to Brewers, Port Talbot in September, while other notable disposals in October involved ECW H47/31F-bodied Leyland Olympian ONTL11/1Rs LO36-40 (KGG 156-60Y), which passed to Eastern Counties at that time.

Green Line, Paisley

MCW Metroriders F110/6 YWO were previously owned by Anslow, Pontypool. The Neilston-Gallowhill service was due to revert to being Neilston-Paisley town centre on 3 November ,when EB Travel was to commence running to Gallowhill (see above).

Hall, Kennoway

YPL 390T, a B41F Leyland National 10351B/1R previously London & Country SNB390, was acquired in July. Talbot Pullman F914 KRJ was sold to Ramm (dealer), Sudden in the same month.

Henderson, Hamilton

Mercedes-Benz 709D P454 MFS carries a rear end advertisement for the Kingsway MoT Centre in East Kilbride.

Horsburgh, Pumpherston

From 6 October this firm took over operation of subsidised services 404/405/406 (Livingston-Murieston, Monday to Saturday), 407 (Livingston-Kirknewton, Sundays) and 489 (Livingston-Deans, evenings) which, despite the plethora of numbers is all one bus working. These contracted services had previously been operated by Bulldog, Whitburn.

Kelvin FB

An interesting vehicle obtained on loan from Bristol City Line from 11 September was M880 ATC, a Volvo B6 with Plaxton Pointer B35F bodywork numbered 8880 in the City Line fleet. It was allocated to Cumbernauld depot as MV49, but moved to the Greater Glasgow fleet on 9 October.

The latest vehicles to appear in FirstBus all-over red include Dennis Dart MD16, Leyland Leopards CL134/5, SL246, Leyland National Greenway SN38, Leyland Olympians CO40, 212, LO44, 112, LOC102, Leyland Tigers CT1, 205/38, ST327/34/6/8/40/1/3/5/51/71/96/7; MCW Metrobuses DM147/59/65, MCW Metroriders MM36, 59, 107 and Volvo B10Ms SV415/33/9/58/77/93, 514/5/9/25.

MCW Metroriders GM8 (F238 EDS), GM24-9 (F345/290/301/47/03/02 MGB) were renumbered MM8, 24-9 around August. Similar GM52 (E192 BNS) has been transferred in from GCT and renumbered MM52. Dennis Darts MD22-4/6-8 have been transferred to Greater Glasgow. Amongst the various Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans from the Greater Glasgow fleet which have been used by this company for varying periods during the past year have been LA1192, 1234/52/61/2/7/91-5.

Leyland Olympian coaches CO40/1 were demoted to service work in October. Leyland Tiger coach CT1 has been reeated from C46Ft to C48F while CT238/9 are now B49F, ex-C51F.

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-60 coach CV3 (H955 DRJ) was returned to Yeates (dealer), Loughborough in October after its spell on loan for the summer. Vehicles sold by the beginning of October to Wigley (dealer), Carlton comprised Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopards SL138/53 (WSU 438/53S), SL157 (GMS 293S); Duple-bodied Leyland Leopards SL128 (FSF 728S, TSV 612, CFS 112S), SL152 (YHS 282S), CL158 (WGB 497W, 630 DYE, RMS 394W), CL178/9 (NNH 190/89Y); Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger CT9 (WLT 357, TFS 318Y); Roe-bodied Leyland Atlanteans LA538 (VET 606S), LA540/1 (CWG 771/2V) and Leyland National SN61 (UFG 50S). SL152 was of particular interest in that it was new to Paton, Renfrew in 1977.

Airdrie depot was due to close on 22 November with operation of services being transferred to Motherwell and Cumbernauld depots. All recently introduced local services radiating from Stevenston Safeway were withdrawn with effect from 13 October.

Key, Johnstone

D93 CFA is a Ford Transit with Dormobile B16F body previously owned by Bellview, Paisley. A second Johnstone local service, via Renshaw Road, was due to commence on 17 November. It will run every 10min Mondays to Saturdays.

Liddell, Auchinleck

SK1 9039 (*B596 LJU*) is a DAF MB200DKTL600 with LAG C49Ft coachwork acquired in July ex-Stuart, Dukinfield, while CPO 354W is a Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R with East Lancs H46/27F body acquired in August ex-Castle, Speke. Leyland Atlantean AFY 185X carries fleet number D1.

Vehicles withdrawn from service by July this year included Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard PPM 890R, Plaxton-bodied Volvo B58 3427 RU (*TGD 972R*), Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean RUS 318R and Citroen C25D E657 AUS. Other vehicles which had left the fleet by then included Plaxton-bodied Volvo B58s MPY 908P and KGG 660V, Duple-bodied Ford R1114s PNB 234R and NJS 386S, Duple-bodied Volvo B58 HCS 806V and Plaxton-bodied Scania K112 DXI 5780 (*A683 OBA*).

Lippen, Johnstone

P408 RGG is a Mercedes-Benz 609D with Adamson C24F coachwork, acquired in August ex-Coakley, New Stevenston to replace Carlyle B20F-bodied Freight Rover Sherpa E172 TWO, which passed to Blythswood (dealer), Glasgow in exchange.

Lothian

Leyland Olympian 347 has been given a white-based rear end advertisement for the Edinburgh Christopher North House Hotel. Leyland Lynx 179 has been refurbished and was expected to return to service soon after October, following the repair of extensive accident damage sustained last year. A number of Leyland Atlanteans (including 622) were despatched to York in September in full fleet colours but with LRT York fleetnames, for use on school contract work.

Group codes	
AA —	Arriva (formerly Cowie Group)
FB —	FirstBus
RP —	Rapson's
NX —	National Express Group
ST —	Stagecoach Holdings
YT —	Yorkshire Traction

Lowland FB

Ten new Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs were due for delivery around November, principally for use on linked routes 113/138/141/315 operated by Dalkeith depot. It was anticipated that they would be numbered 219-21/3-9. 1538-42 (P538-42 YSH) are Optare MetroRiders delivered in July for use on the Border Courier services, but further details are awaited.

Optare Prisma 78 has been repainted from Midland Bluebird FirstBus livery to SMT FirstBus colours. Other recent repaints into these colours include Leyland Olympian 928, Optare MetroRiders 1507/8 and Seddon Pennine 1625, while Mercedes-Benz 811D 675 and Seddon Pennine 1639 have been repainted into Lowland FirstBus livery. Leyland Atlantean 751 is in GRT style Lowland livery, while Volvo B58-61 2201 is now in GRT style Glass livery.

In addition to route branding above their windows, Dennis Dart SLFs 203-15 are being given 'Diamond Service — Low Floor Bus' and 'this is a kneeling bus' lettering for use on service 66 (Balerno-Wallyford).

Alexander-bodied Seddon Pennine 1687 had been resealed from B53F to B60F by July.

McCull, Balloch

A new vehicle in this fleet is unusual, to say the least, but R957 RCH is a Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10M-62 which arrived in August and has been used on Discovering Scotland tours on behalf of Pringle, Bearsden. Another three Northern Counties H43/32F-bodied Leyland Atlanteans to have joined this fleet are MRJ 402W (AN68A/1R) and SND 465/77X (AN68B/1R) — previously Greater Manchester South 4402/65/77.

McDade, Uddingston

Amongst recent additions are MCW H44/32F-bodied Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR OUC 57R ex-Marbill, Beith and Talbot Pullman B22F G872 SKE ex-Ashton, Port Glasgow.

MacEwan, Amisfield

R27/8 USM are Mercedes-Benz O.814s with UVG B33F bodywork, which were new in August — the former having been illustrated last month. They are used on the recently-won tendered services between Edinburgh and Biggar.

Plaxton C43F-bodied Bristol LH PTT 71R was sold to Car & Truck Services (dealer), Elvanfoot some time ago.

MacLean, Craighouse

New for the Jura Bus service in October 1995 was N630 WDB, an LDV 400 with Deansgate 16-seat bodywork.

McNairn, Coatbridge

E901 GCU and E326 WYS are Renault S56s with Alexander B25F body acquired recently ex-Tynemouth & District 301 and Clydebus Buses 326 respectively — both are now in blue and yellow fleet livery for use on the local services run by this company.

McQueen, Garelochhead

AVB C24F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D F76 HVO passed to Brewer, New Marske in May.

Mairs, Aberdeen FB

Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D 711 (FSU 335, D517 RCK) was written off after an accident in September. As a result its cherished mark has passed to similar, but Alexander-bodied, 717 (D232 UHC).

Caetano-bodied Toyota Optimos 737/8 (K67 HAS, L538 XUT) and Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard 728 (HSO 61N) have been transferred to Grampian. As a result of the loss of the two executive mini-coaches, Dennis Javelin 740 has been refurbished to executive standards with tables and coffee machines and its seating reduced, hence its recent repaint into the silver executive livery, while similar 739 received ivory coach livery.

Marbill, Beith

Duple C45F-bodied Ford R1014 BHN 763B (BHN 293B, YDH 851S) and Plaxton C47F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R SFJ 151R were acquired in July, ex-Hamilton, Maybole and Gibson, Moffat respectively — presumably for spares.

Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Fleetline XSJ 646T was being broken up by July, while the remains of MCW-bodied Fleetlines NOC 380R, SDA 555S and Duple-bodied Leyland Leopard VCD 296S had all gone by August. MCW-bodied Fleetline OUC 57R was sold to McDade, Uddingston in August.

Marshall, Baillieston

This company retains a few buses in its coach fleet to carry out school contracts etc. The latest of these is Northern Counties H44/31F-bodied Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR XSJ 665T, acquired in September ex-Western Buses 865.

Midland Bluebird FB

579-81 (P579-81 RSG) are Scania L113CRLs with Wright Access-ultralow B47F bodywork new around June, but which appear to have escaped reporting until now. They entered service initially from Larbert depot in a non-standard livery of all-over ivory. Another arrival earlier this year which appears not to have been recorded until now is 788 (HSO 288V), an Alexander H45/29D-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R, previously Grampian 288. It also entered service from Larbert around June, still in Grampian colours, but with Midland Bluebird fleet names.

1988 Plaxton C53F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3ARZAs F621/2 XWY arrived in August from the Yorkshire Rider fleet, where they were numbered 1621/2. They entered service from Larbert depot in full Bradford Traveller livery, and were later allocated fleet numbers 191/0. Although they carry Midland Bluebird legal lettering, they also have notices at the top of the windscreen indicating that they are on loan to the company.

September additions comprised Alexander H45/29D-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R 776 (HRS 276V) — previously Grampian 276, together with 33 (PNW 606W) and 35/7 (XTJ 5.7W) — Leyland National NL116L11/1Rs with B52F (33) or B49F bodywork respectively, previously Greater Manchester North 102/5/7. Similar CKB 161X, previously Greater Manchester North 161, has also been purchased, but is reported to be for spares only.

Whilst 33 at least was operated in orange initially, 33/5/7 have all been repainted into Midland Bluebird FirstBus livery and allocated to Linlithgow depot for use on West Lothian Council subsidised services calling for vehicles with lower step heights than the indigenous Leyland Leopards originally allocated to this work.

Other recent repaints into these colours include Mercedes-Benz O.405 57; Scania N113CRBs 553/5/8/63; Scania L113CRL 579; Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 638/56; Leyland Atlantean 719 and MCW Metrobus 870. Leyland Olympians 909/41 and Renault S75 1474 have been repainted into SMT FirstBus livery. Leyland Tiger 348 has been repainted into GRT style SMT Coaches livery and Leyland Atlantean 743 is now in GRT style Midland Bluebird livery ex-Grampian colours while Leyland Leopard 442 has had its Midland blue areas repainted SMT green, and is in use at Linlithgow depot.

Dennis Dart SLFs 201/2 are in a white and red livery with appropriate lettering for use on Easyboarder service E68 (Springkerse Retail Park - Dollar/Yetts o'Mockhart) subsidised by Clackmannanshire and Stirling Councils and operated from Bannockburn depot. Mercedes-Benz 709D 634 has been given a special Fallin Hoppa livery of white with a blue band. Similar 626 has been painted into Kings of Dunblane livery for use on service C66/C67 (Doune-Whitecross) operated on behalf of Stirling Council, and taken over on 29 September from Goosecroft, Stirling as a result of the latest round of tendering.

Jonckheere-bodied Volvo 2203 had been resealed from C51Ft to C46Ft by September.

During the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Edinburgh from 18-27 October, many park-&-ride sites were established around the city, linked to existing bus routes. In addition, a dedicated bus service was operated by Midland Bluebird SMT between the Royal Highland Centre at Inglinton and St Andrew Square using mainly Leyland Olympians carrying side stickers featuring the Commonwealth Edinburgh '97 logo. In addition, many service buses in both the Midland Bluebird and Lowland SMT fleets, featured stickers in their windscreens detailing which park and ride sites they served.

Morrow, Clydebank

A second local service in Clydebank started on 20 October, numbered 147 and running every 30min between Whitecrook and the town centre.

Mundell, Port Askaig

Plaxton C53F-bodied Bedford YRT YNK 508N was sold in August.

Newark, Kilmacolm

Half hourly services from Greenock town centre to Inverclyde Royal Hospital and Bow Farm Flats were registered by this operator, to start on 6 November.

Orion, Wemyss Bay

In response to increasing competition from Clydeside on the Braeside service, this company introduced a new 15min service between Greenock (West Stewart Street) and Gourack (Pierhead) on 19 September. Carlyle-bodied Freight Rover Sherpas G271 GKG and G273 HBO are now with Reed, Christchurch and Williams, Newtown respectively.

Owen, Newhouse

The Plaxton-bodied Volvo coach with the appropriate registration L800 WEN was sold last April — its registration is still appropriate as its new owner is Owen, Oswestry!

Park, Hamilton

The East Kilbride local services, introduced earlier this year in conjunction with Stagecoach and in competition with FirstBus services in the town, were cancelled with effect from 24 October. This development repeats the events of a few years ago.

Neoplan Skyliner LSK 481 (*H981 GDV*) was repainted into red, grey and white fleet livery in August ex-allover white while Jonckheere-bodied Volvos M730/1 KJU were given Scottish Citylinking fleet names on their white livery in the same month.

The latest crop of new owners for sold Volvo coaches comprises Chambers, Moneymore (N809/16 NHS); City of Oxford (H950/1 DRJ); Clarke, Lower Sydenham (M627/8/30 FNS, N808 NHS); Classic, Anfield Plain (M575 DSJ); Ellis, London (M572/4 DSJ); Heyfordian, Upper Heyford (M571 DSJ); Kerslake, Trethomas (M570 DSJ); Mills, Gornal Wood (L636 AYS); Nuttall, Penwortham (L293 AHS) and Wood, Buckfastleigh (L647 AYS).

Paterson, Kilbirnie

Leyland National 10351/1R-B44F GEU 364N has been sold, similar GEU 365N still providing spares for other Leyland Nationals in the fleet.

Post Office

Recent postbus allocations not previously recorded include nine-seat LDV Pilots 6750022 (P913 RSC) to Port Askaig-Bowmore; 6750025 (P914 RSC) to Port Askaig-Port Ellen; 6750026 (P851 RSC) to West Calder-Tarbrax; 6750028 (P915 RSC) to Biggar-Crawfordjohn; 6750030 (P917 RSC) to Annan-Powfoot; 6750031 (P919 RSC) to Arran South down-seated to seven; 6750032 (P854 RSC) to Hawick-Bonchester Bridge; 6750033 (P918 RSC) to Thornhill-Monaive; 6750034 (P855 RSC) to Kelso-Stichill; 6750036 (P929 RSC) to Inveraray-Dalmally; 6750038 (P862 RSC) to Aberfeldy-Killin; 6750039 (P920 RSC) to Kirkcudbright-Borgue; 6750040 (P931 RSC) to Lockerbie reserve; 6750041 (P921 RSC) to Oban reserve; 6750042 (P495 OSC) to Alligin-Kinlochewe; 6750043 (P857 RSC) to Aberfeldy-Glenlyon; 6750044 (P922 RSC) to Tiree; 6750046 (P496 OSC) to Kyle reserve; 6750048 (P863 RSC) to Haddington-Garvald; 6750050 (P932 RSC) to Lockerbie-St Anns; 6750052 (P923 RSC) to Castle Douglas-Mossdale; 6750054 (P866 RSC) to Dunbar-Inverwick; 6750056 (P926 RSC) to Castle Douglas-Auchencrain; 6750058 (P927 RSC) to Port Ellen-Portnahaven; 6750059 (P861 RSC) to Dalkeith-Moorfoot and 6750060 (P928 RSC) to Port Ellen reserve.

Pringle, Bearsden

Alexander H44/31F-bodied Daimler Fleetline CRG6LXB SMS 128P was acquired from Highland Country in July for spares.

Puma, Glasgow

Alexander B25F-bodied Dodge S56 E809 JSX had been withdrawn from service by August.

Rennie, Dunfermline

Subsidised hourly Monday to Saturday service R43 (Inverkeithing-North Queensferry) was introduced on 19 August.

Revie, Dalmeir

Ian McTavish, proprietor of the erstwhile McTavish Coaches which was sold to McColl, Balloch earlier this year, has started trading again under the name of Revie Coaches. A circular local service numbered 141 running every 30min around Clydebank, Dalmeir, Mountblow and Duntocher was due to start on 20 October, but appears to have been cancelled before operations started.

Riverside, Paisley

New half-hourly service 70 between Paisley town centre and Glenbrittle Drive, was due to start on 20 October.

On 10 November yet another step in the consolidation of the position of the Stagecoach group in Ayrshire was effected, when virtually all of the commercial bus services operated by Shuttle Buses of Kilwinning were given up and replaced by Stagecoach subsidiary, Western Buses.

The services involved included those from Irvine Cross to Kilwinning via Blacklands, various local services within Irvine to Rubie Crescent, Hunter Drive, Broomlands, and a works service to Stevenston Industrial Estate. Of particular note is that they also included a local service in Kilmarnock between the town centre and Wardneuk, which appeared to operate as a franchised route from Stagecoach, as the Shuttle Buses vehicle employed was in full Stagecoach livery. In addition to these commercial services, the company also gave up the Strathclyde PTE contract to provide evening and Sunday journeys between Irvine or Kilwinning and Kilbirnie or Beith. Three vehicles were expected to pass to Western Buses with these services.

Shuttle Buses was set up at the end of 1990 by two former Western Scottish employees, Dave Granger and the late Harry Hay, with the intention of carving out a niche for minibus operations in that part of Ayrshire served at that time principally by Western Scottish, A1 Service and AA Motors. Although based in Kilwinning, early service developments took place not only in the Irvine area but also in Ayr and Kilmarnock, competing as a result with all three other operators mentioned. The Ayr service soon passed to Carrick Coaches, another company started by a former Western Scottish employee, and the Kilmarnock services were given up soon after Western passed into Stagecoach ownership in 1995. In the Irvine area, AA Motors was principally affected by competition from

Shuttle Buses, and this had also been extended to Troon. In due course, agreement seemed to be reached, whereby Shuttle Buses left the Troon services to AA, and AA gave up its long-established Blacklands route between Irvine and Kilwinning to Shuttle Buses.

The Blacklands route was noteworthy in that it was one of the few services in the northern part of Ayrshire which had changed hands a number of times since its inception. Started by William Meney of Blacklands in the 1920's, its operation passed to William Love of Irvine shortly after the Transport Act 1930 came into force, to James Hicks of Ayr briefly during 1949, then to the Northern Roadways subsidiary Northern Ayrshire Coaches later that year and thereafter to AA Motors four years later.

Following the withdrawal of its unsubsidised routes, Shuttle Buses still continues to be a local bus service operator as PTE contracted services 332/333 (Galston-Stewarton/Kilmarnock) and 339 (Irvine-Kilwinning via Torronyard) remain with the company. A commercial, school service between Irvine and Marr College in Troon is also being continued. In addition to this work, Shuttle Buses will still be undertaking contract and hire business with the remaining vehicles in the fleet, which are expected to number around 15 in future rather than the previous 23.

Stagecoach, for its part, has now almost no commercial local bus service competition in Ayrshire only three years after having bought Western Buses. The only significant competitor left, other than FirstBus and the Cowie Group, are Carrick Coaches of Ayr who are still running on the Ayr/Dalmellington corridor.

Rowe, Muirkirk

The Tudhope name is being retained for the Hurlford operations and Alexander-bodied Ailsas KSD 90, 103W have been smartly repainted into blue and white Tudhope livery with Tudhope fleet names. Similar KSD 110W is being broken up for spares. ECW C47F-bodied Leyland Leopard VUD 30X was sold to Milfer, Calderbank in July.

S&A Coaches, Erskine

New operator Allan Arnott, trading as S&A Coaches, has registered a service numbered 38 between Glasgow city centre and Eastwood Toll which is to follow the route of Greater Glasgow service 38, together with Stagecoach service 4/4A/4B. This new service is to run eight times per hour, with effect from 1 December.

Shuttle Buses, Kilwinning

Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D N2 SBL has been re-registered N446 TOS and now carries a mainly blue overall advertisement for Irvine Glazing. It was intended that this bus would be sold to Western Buses in November together with similar J216/7 XKY. Other Mercedes-Benz minibuses VJ1 3001, J607/9 KGB, and L917 UGA were advertised for sale in October. Hired Dornobile-bodied Dodge S46 E643 DCK was returned to its owner, Western Buses, in the same month.

Slaemuir, Port Glasgow

Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D E974 VWY was sold earlier this year and is now with Botley & Wheeler, Bishops Waltham.

Stagecoach Glasgow ST

Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 039 (RBZ 3428) and 058 (RBZ 5491) were transferred to Western Buses in July, followed by Alexander-bodied Volvo B10M-55s 503/4/15 (R503/4/15 KSA) in August/September, while Leyland Leopard 631 (WFS 147W) and Leyland Titan 955 (OHV 762Y) have been transferred into this fleet from Western Buses.

Stokes, Carstairs

From 8 September this company began operating early morning and all evening journeys on service 191, Lanark to Biggar, on a subsidised basis. Other journeys on this route, previously subsidised, are still being maintained but without subsidy by the former contractor, Wilson's Coaches.

Travel Dundee NX

The first low-floor double-deck bus for a Scottish operator is due to join this fleet in the near future in the shape of a new version of the Optare Spectra, one of a pair ordered by Travel West Midlands.

Walker, Clydebank

The registration for the local service between Clydebank and Drumchapel was cancelled with effect from 6 October.

Western ST

New Plaxton Interurban DP51F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 119 (R119 OPS) entered service from Ardrossan depot in September. Two other vehicles added to the fleet in September were 174/5 (G528/9 LWU), Plaxton C48F-bodied Volvo B10M-60s previously numbered 60/1 in the Midland Red South fleet.

Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 039 (RBZ 3428) and 058 (RBZ 5491) were transferred to this company from Stagecoach Glasgow in July, followed by Alexander-bodied Volvo B10M-55s 503/4/15 (R503/4/15 KSA) in August/September, while Leyland Leopard 631 (WFS 147W) and Leyland Titan 955 (OHV 762Y) have been transferred to the Stagecoach Glasgow fleet.

In order to make room for recent deliveries of Plaxton Interurbans, the Alexander-bodied Dennis Dorchester 116-21 were renumbered 416-21 in July. Leyland Titans are being up-seated to H44/27D on overhaul and those treated so far include 938/50/3/7.

Ex-AA Buses Carlyle-bodied Iveco 49.10 068 (G362 FOP) has been transferred to the service fleet as a staff bus, and is now numbered 1036 accordingly. Former Oban & District Leyland Leopard driver trainers 1039/40 are in a yellow and white livery. Volvo Olympian 929 is now in A1 Service blue and white livery. Leyland Titans 938/44/6/9-51/3/7/67 have been repainted into corporate livery with Stagecoach fleetnames primarily (but not exclusively) for use on service 4A/4B (Newton Mearns-Glasgow), which is regarded as part of the Stagecoach Glasgow network. Other recent recipients of stripes include Leyland Leopards 628/76/80/97. A bright yellow School Bus livery may be developed for vehicles used exclusively on school contract work, depending upon operational flexibility — it is understood that Leyland Titan 966 is likely to be the first recipient in the near future.

Park Royal H43/32F-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R 805 (BNC 936T) has gone to Midland Red South, while Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tigers 163/4 (NIB 5232/3, B47/8 DWE) and Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Fleetline 865 (XSJ 665T) passed to Bluebird Buses and Marshall, Baillieston respectively in September.

White Ribbon, East Kilbride

R734 EGD is a Mercedes-Benz 612D with Onyx C24F coachwork, R739 EGD is another Mercedes-Benz 814D with Plaxton C32F coachwork and R632 EYS is another 814D with Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F bodywork.

Wilson, Carnwath

Various coaches have been re-registered during the past year but not previously recorded, comprising Caetano-bodied Volvo B10M-60 K96 UFP to NIL 1506 last November; Caetano-bodied Leyland Tigers C312 CES (122 ASV, C357 FVU) and C314 CES (121 ASV, C356 FVU) to YCR 814 and HIL 8647 respectively in April; Caetano-bodied Volvo B10M-62s L41-3 CAY to NIL 3949/8/7 in May and Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-62s M125/6 UWY to NIL 4765 and NIL 3296 respectively in June.

Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D NDS 837Y was withdrawn earlier this year whilst Duple-bodied Volvo B58-61 NGD 26V was broken up by July. ECW B39F-bodied Bristol LH OJD 44R, Duple C53F-bodied Leyland Leopard YST 310W and Duple C48F-bodied Ford R1114 A620 LCP were all sold to Kirkby (dealer), Anston in April.



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Clydeside's P225 SGB is an Optare MetroRider allocated to the new Flagship Renfrewshire X22 direct service to Erskine new town. THOMAS BRYCELAND

Reports on vehicles in Northern Ireland only should be sent, please, to: **G. Irvine Millar, 54 Castlemore Avenue, Belfast BT6 9RG**, and those for the Irish Republic to: **John A. Doherty, 21 Whitebeam Avenue, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14**.

Ulsterbus

Vehicles will now display 'Ulsterbus, a subsidiary of Northern Ireland Transport Holding Co' upon repaint. It is not clear why the previous image — 'Ulsterbus a Translink Company' has been abandoned, or whether on not 'Translink' as the marketing image for the integrated transport administration will continue.

Vehicles returned to service include Leyland Leopard/PSU3E/4R/Alexander 107 (ROI 107), Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Duple 549, (EXI 5549) and Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3ARZA/Alexander, 525 (PXI 5525), whilst Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Duple, 554 (BXI 5554) has been delicensed.

Withdrawn from the **Flexibus** fleet and in reserve are Renault Master 22 (JXI 222), and Mercedes 609D conversion 24 (JXI 224).

Citybus

Bristol RELL6G/Alexander 2544 (AXI 2544) is withdrawn following accident damage, replaced by similar 2481 (XOI 2481) from reserve. 2557 (AXI 2557) is sold for scrap to Beattie, Hillsborough, whilst 2446/57 are due to pass to Belfast Royal Academy as replacements for ex-Ulsterbus Leyland Leopards KOI 9936/62.

Dublin Bus

Latest Volvo Olympians are RV371-7 (97 D 371-7) All recent deliveries carry CitySwift livery, and are in regular use on routes 16 and 33.

It can now be confirmed that the new standard fleet livery will be a blue and cream scheme, as tried on Volvo Olympian RA178 at Donnybrook, but having the upper cream area extended to the lower window level. It will be applied as regular repaints fall due. The current two-tone green scheme first appeared with the Bombardier in 1981, and was subsequently applied universally.

Volvo Olympians RH29/30 at Summerhill, have received CitySwift livery for use on route 13.

Withdrawals to note are single-deck Bombardier KC2 (ASI 2), and GAC Citybus KC4 (ZSI 4) at Summerhill, GAC Citybus KC54 (KZG 54) and Bombardiers KD 147/8 (147/8 JZL) at Conyngham Road; also GAC Citybus KC59 (KZG 59) and Bombardier KD 358 (GSI 359) — both following accident damage — at Donnybrook.

Transfers to Conyngham Road are as follows:

Bombardiers KD88 (from Summerhill), KD145 (from Phibsborough) and KD223 (from Donnybrook); also GAC Citybuses KC120/56/77 (from temporary store)

Van Hool-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68 D606 (606 ZO) has replaced earlier Atlantean DF433 (433 ZD) as tree-lopper at Donnybrook.

From mid-October routes 19/19A/29A/42B have adopted the Autofare system.

Volvo Olympian RH90 now carries 'Move Over Butler' advertising livery, previously Irish Rail Fastrack Parcels, whilst similar RH41 is now in green fleet livery, (previously Irish Rail and White Wedding).

Bus Eireann

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10Ms used by Presidential candidates were VP44 — Mary McAleese and VP 53 — Adi Roche.

At Waterford, ME209/10 (97 W 173/4) have joined ML 16/9-20 on the Ballybeg route.

Transfers from Broadstone to Ballina for Schools services are GAC Ruralbuses KS14, 40-3.

Withdrawals at Ballina include Leyland Leopard PSU5/4R MDS139, MGS173/95 (139 IK etc) and Volvo B57 VS129 (81 D 1634)

At Dundalk, Van Hool-bodied Bedford SB5 has been repainted in fleet livery (red and white), and now acts as a driver trainer in addition to school bus duties.

IRISH INDEPENDENTS

APT, Kells

Leyland Royal Tiger Doyen, WDW 2174 (BXI 7437, A941 XFW, OHE 50, A71 WDT) has passed to Dalling & Driscoll Forestfash.

Ards Tours, Newtownards

Leyland Atlantean/Park Royal UNA 853S has passed to Ferris, Toomebridge for scrap.

Darragh, Kilrea

New, ex-McTaggart, Greenock, is DAF MB200/Van Hool C49Ft, JIL 2494 (426 OSB, SV 2493, B262 MSC).

Lakeland Tours, Lisbellaw

DAF SB3000/Van Hool C49Ft, J792 KHD is now NIL 6741.

Lough Swilly

Full details of recent additions to the second-hand Leyland Leopard fleet are shown in the table below:

McDermott, Portaferry

DAF SB2300/Smit, A714 XNV is now RBZ 7989.

Mallon, Armagh

Replacing withdrawn ex-Ulsterbus Leyland Leopard/Alexander B53F, DOI 1540 is Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R/Duple C47F, ALZ 6747 (KRN 118T), ex-Poots, Tandragee.

Molloy, Crossmaglen

Acquired is Scania K112CRS/Jonckheere C57F, TIB 8566 (B508 CRD), ex-Taylor, Lawford.

Moore, Greenisland

Acquired ex-Chambers, Moneymore are Mercedes-Benz 809D, PIW 5842, and 711D, PIW 5844, both bodied Onyx C24F, and Volvo B10M-60/Jonckheere C51F, OIW 3361 (90 LH 1843, 90 LH 1472) and RIW 4098 (89 MN 1265, F90 CBD).

Moran, Portglenone

Ex-OK Coaches, Greysteel is Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Plaxton C53F, C30 PRX.

LOUGH SWILLY

358	79 DL 621 (TCK722, VTY 202T)	PSU3/3RT	Plaxton	OK, Bishop Auckland
359	74 DL 548 (PUP 693M)	PSU3B/4R	Duple	OK, Bishop Auckland
360	79 DL 620 (KUB 542V)	PSU3E/4R	Plaxton	Northumbria
361	76 DL 596 (MCL 936P)	PSU3C/4R	Alexander	OK, Bishop Auckland
362	76 DL 600 (OSJ 621R)	PSU3C/4R	Alexander	OK, Bishop Auckland
363	76 DL ??? (MCL 933P)	PSU3C/4R	Alexander	OK, Bishop Auckland
364	76 DL 601 (MCL 934P)	PSU3C/4R	Alexander	OK, Bishop Auckland
365	79 DL 633 (WCK 130V)	PSU3E/4R	Duple	OK, Bishop Auckland
366	78 DL ??? (ULS 324T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Irvine Law
367	78 DL 645 (TSJ 37S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
368	78 DL 649 (TSJ 39S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
369	78 DL 655 (TSJ 41S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
370	78 DL 648 (TSJ 42S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
371	78 DL 651 (TSJ 43S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
372	78 DL 646 (TSJ 44S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
373	78 DL 654 (TSJ 50S, FUS 31S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
374	78 DL 652 (TSJ 53S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
375	78 DL 650 (TSJ 56S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
376	78 DL 657 (TSJ 63S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
377	78 DL 647 (TSJ 84S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
378	79 DL 623 (BSJ 893T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
379	79 DL 626 (BSJ 890T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
380	79 DL 631 (BSJ 898T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
381	79 DL 632 (BSJ 900T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
382	79 DL 628 (BSJ 901T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
383	79 DL 630 (BSJ 904T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
384	79 DL 625 (BSJ 905T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
385	79 DL 622 (BSJ 907T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
386	79 DL 629 (BSJ 913T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
387	79 DL 627 (BSJ 920T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
388	79 DL 624 (BSJ 928T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
389	80 DL 690 (GCS 30V, WDS 210V)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
390	80 DL 689 (GCS 31V)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
391	80 DL 691 (GCS 32V)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
392	77 DL 585 (WCW 312R)	PSU3D/2R	Alexander	Clydeside
393	77 DL 586 (WCW 314R)	PSU3D/2R	Alexander	Clydeside
394	78 DL 653 (YCS 88T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
395	78 DL 658 (YCS 90T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
396	78 DL 656 (YCS 81T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
397	78 DL ??? (TSJ 51S)	PSU3D/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
398	79 DL ??? (BSJ 903T)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside
399	80 DL ??? (GCS 64V)	PSU3E/4R	Alexander	Clydeside

Ex-Clydeside Leyland Tiger TRCLXC/2RH/Plaxton Paramount 3200s are as follows:

400	84 DL ??? (A897 ASJ, 32 CLT, A806 WSU, VCS 376, A175 UGB)
401	84 DL ??? (WLT 974, A177 UGB)
402	84 DL 2122 (54 CLT, A179 UGB)
403	84 DL ??? (A848 ASJ VLT 234 A180 UGB)

As a result of this influx, the following Leopards are withdrawn:

Marshall-bodied: 240 (702 PZO, PKG 624G), 241 (703 PZO, PKG 628G), 254 (DSI 408, CHE 531K), 257 (DSI 409, CHE 532K), 277 (JZG 218, KHD 914K), 286 (IZG 679, KHD 913K), 287 (IZS 680, KHD 915K), 290 (IZS 683, KHD 924K), 319 (73 DL 31, JHA 218L), 325 (73 DL 34, JHA 248L) and 326 (73 DL 35, JHA 239L).

Willowbrook-bodied: 256 (DSI 406, AKM 438K).

Alexander-bodied: 272 (8189 IH, BUI8602, EPT 82G), 273 (1174 ZP, BUI 8646, RPT 292K), 274 (8970 IH, BUI 9237, RPT 296K), 298 (71 DL 518, COI 1450), 300 (72 DL 502, DOI 1576), 301 (73 DL 1, DOI 1538), 302 (71 DL 31, DOI 3464), 304 (71 DL 510, DOI 3453), 306 (71 DL 4, DOI 3495), 308 (71 DL 7, DOI 3482)309 (71 DL 8, BOI 1397), 310 (72 DL 8, DOI 1558), 312 (70 DL 9, BOI 1376), 314 (72 DL 7, DOI 3475) and 318 (69 DL 17, AOI 1350).

Plaxton-bodied: 279 (JZG 216, AHL 727K), 281 (JZG 219, AHL 729K), 341 (74 DL 503, PRR 481M) and 343 (74 DL 502, PRR 480M).

North Antrim Coaches, Ballymena

Acquired, ex-International, Thornton Heath, is Bova Futura C55F, WDW 8521 (124 JPO, A22 LKV).

Northdown Coach Hire, Bangor

Acquired, ex-Cygnus, Paisley, is Volvo B10M-61/Van Hool C49Ft GIL 1681 (F759 ENE).

Northern Coaches, Newtown Abbey

MAN 16.280/Caetano C48Ft, LIW 8223 (D84 DNV), has passed to Blythwood, Glasgow (dealer).

Poots, Tandragee

From Henderson, Hamilton has come Mercedes-Benz 811D/Reeve Burgess C33F, BLZ 3310 (H897 JCS). DAF MB200/Plaxton C57F, YIB 3456, (IIL 8589, B358 DWF) has passed to Antrim Grammar School.

Quinn, Coagh

First full-sized vehicle for this operator is Dennis Javelin/Plaxton Excalibur C53F, VJI 7010.

Riverside, Strablane

First vehicle with this new operator is AEC Reliance 6U3ZR/Duple C57F, BTB 685T, ex-Beardon, Colchester.

Shoreline, Kilkeel

From Brown, Edinburgh comes Mercedes-Benz 711D/Onyx C24F, M298 XSX.

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FirstBus gets rail franchise
Quality partnerships in Glasgow and Birmingham

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National Express set for Tayside
National Express keeps East Midlands routes
Shearings sold to management
East Yorkshire buys Armstrong Galley
MTL gets Merseyrail

MARCH

FirstBus to divest in Scotland
Seatbelts for school coaches
Trent links with Stagecoach
Nat Express places Tayside Offer
Heddingham buys Osborne

APRIL

FirstBus gets first ex-London Buses company
National Holidays lives
First Volvo B10BLEs for Stagecoach
Grey-Green SLF

MAY

Cowie cleared on British Bus
Stagecoach launches into Glasgow again
Milton Keynes and Huntingdon sold
Wright goes to Australia

JUNE

Clash of the Titans in Scotland
Go-Ahead bids for Brighton
Scania 4 series debut
East Lancs launches Premyer

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Optare and DAF get back together to launch low-floor double-decker
Metroline and MTL to float
Metrobus grows again
FirstBus gets going in Fife
Stagecoach takes AA Buses

AUGUST

Government to review bus industry
FirstBus offer for Southampton CityBus
Express Travel starts bus services

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Transit sells to Stagecoach
Wallace Arnold stays in the family
TWM's gas buses launched formally
FirstBus launches corporate interior
Green light for Greenways

OCTOBER

Prescott on Integration
TWM orders Mercedes O.405
New low-floor midibus from Optare
Solent Blue Line goes low-floor

NOVEMBER

Stagecoach goes for low-floor Dennis double-deck
Excelsior sold
Northern Counties all double-deck
West Midlands swings to single-deck
Motorway bus lane for Heathrow

DECEMBER

Stagecoach orders for 1998
West Midlands' last Fleetline and first LT contract
Halifax JOC Routemasters

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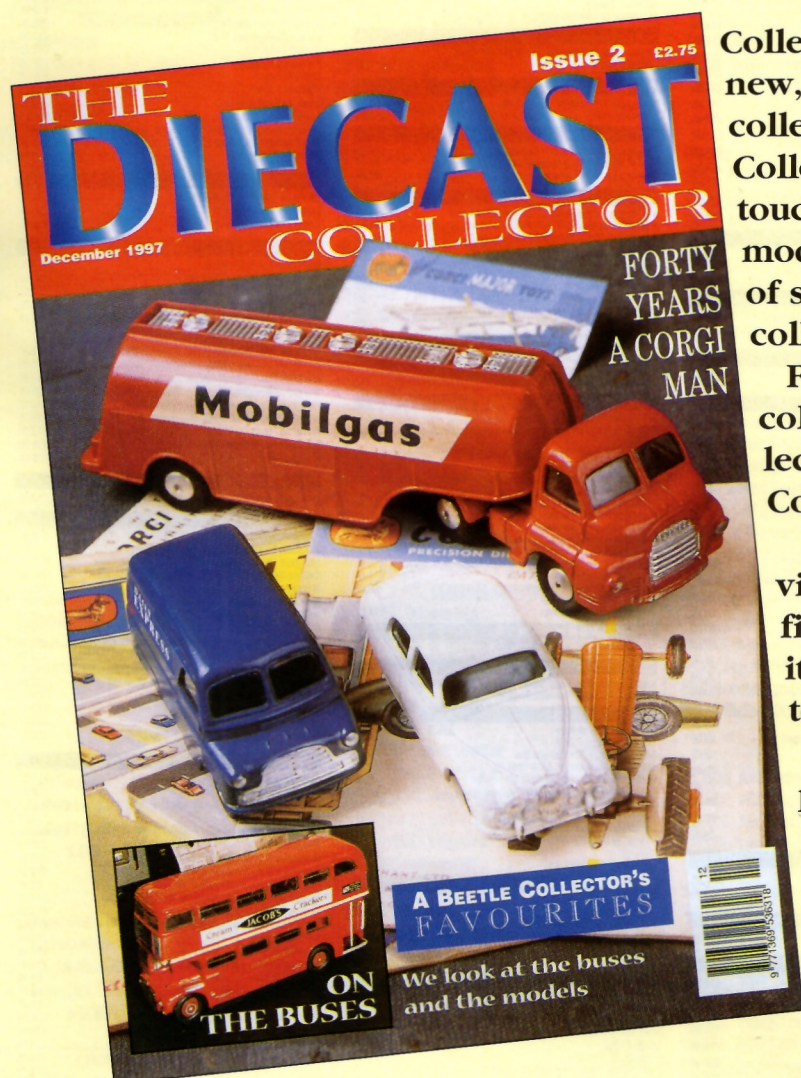
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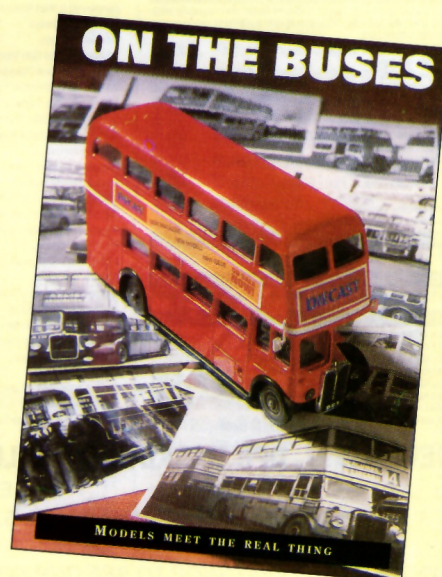
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43102	Leyland Lynx MK1, Wycombe Bus	Nov £10.99

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31804	Bus Depot	£8.99

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55003	PCC Street Car St Louis	Sept £23.49
54012	GM 4506 Greyhound Lines Dog & Target	Sept £20.99
55006	PCC Street Car - Pacific Electric	Sept £23.49

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3240	R/M Guide Friday	£5.99
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Code Description Due Price

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33501	OB Tiffeld Thunderbolt	£13.49
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20617	Pointer Grey Green	£10.39
10124	London Transport SRT I.T.	£9.89
16109DL	PD2 Highbridge Portsmouth	£9.89
22204	TK Flat Artic British Rail	£9.89
24303	B.E.T. Venture	TBA
24501	Alexander Fleetline C Newcastle	TBA
22704	Alexander Y Type B Highland	TBA
14901	Leyland National II C York City Rider	TBA
16516DL	Atlantean Portsmouth	TBA
16113	Leyland PD2 King Alfred	TBA
15622	London Transport RM Circle/Bar	TBA
22906	Bedford TK Box Van Wagon Wheels	TBA

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Seerol Buses Double Deck White Now Only	£3.99
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1:76 Scale/00 gauge precision diecast models



24303 B.E.T. Style Bus DEVON GENERAL

From the fleet of MacBrayne's last month, we now move South to Devon General, illustrating the wide spread popularity of this type of vehicle. On route 16 to Newton Abbot Bus Station, 950 HTT, fleet number 950, is highly decorated to exploit the tourism of the area. Authentic adverts for Kents Cavern, Babbacombe Model Village, Torbay Aircraft Museum and Totnes Motor Museum are all featured on this vehicle.



23307 AEC RF METROBUS

This RF is one of the many which has been preserved by dedicated enthusiasts, however this trusty workhorse still earns its keep, being used on specialist services by the Metrobus group. A pleasing anomaly in an otherwise modern fleet, MLL 792, fleet number RF255, is on route 746 to Tunbridge Wells, displayed on route boards on its roof sides.



24202 Alexander Fleetline EAST YORKSHIRE

The East Yorkshire fleet's dark blue and primrose livery suits these large vehicles well and as with our previous East Yorkshire VR II, this vehicle carries a white stripe along its roof sides. AFT 784C, fleet number 901, is on the 59C Circular Route via Preston and Hedon.



20413 Bristol VR III GREAT YARMOUTH TRANSPORT

The blue and white of Great Yarmouth has been greatly requested over the past months by many of our collectors and so we are proud to present RVF 39R, fleet number 39 to the Exclusive First Editions range on route 16 to Caister.



20617 Pointer/Dart GREY GREEN

Grey Green now operate as part of the Cowie group, although this Pointer has not been graced with any corporate names. In the modern interpretation of the green and grey so well recognised by enthusiasts, M950 LYR, fleet number 950 is on route 173 to East Beckton. Interesting points to note are that it carries the London Transport Bus Pass scheme stickers on its front and nearside.



10124 AEC SRT Class LONDON TRANSPORT

In its original pre-overhaul livery of red and cream, FJJ 736, fleet number SRT 29, represents a vehicle from around 1949 with reduced blinds showing route 34 to Walthamstow, the first to be entirely converted to SRT operation. Details include adverts for British Rail Holidays, Brylcreem, and Aspro. Also garage plates, offside blind and "Watch Your Step" roundel add to the charm of this highly detailed model.



22204 Bedford TK Artic Flat BRITISH RAILWAYS

Our second example from this huge fleet is sure to meet with great approval as it carries a new detailed Rail Freight container with code numbers, weight and carrying capacity all featured on its sides. 116 CKV, displays its fleet details on its cab doors and British Railways logo on its front making a highly detailed and accurate model for the most discerning of collectors.



16109DL Leyland PD2 Highbridge PORTSMOUTH

Produced in very limited numbers, the De-Luxe Series continues to attract attention offering collectors alternative identities to some of our most popular models. GTP 995, fleet number 78 is one such vehicle on a new route, 37A to Guildhall, also carrying new adverts for Brickwoods Ales and Rentaset Radio Hire.

Keep up to date with all our model release information by joining our Subscription Service for an annual U.K. fee of £4.
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